

# SOME MEMORIES



ROBERT COLLYER



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2011 with funding from

The Institute of Museum and Library Services through an Indiana State Library LSTA Grant

100/









*Robert Calliper*

*Helen L. Photo - Dec 25 1877*  
*2416. Williams St. Boston.*

# SOME MEMORIES

BY  
ROBERT COLLYER



BOSTON  
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION  
25 BEACON STREET

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

*To*  
*my dear friend through all the years*  
*of my life in New York*

HENRY HUDDLESTON ROGERS



## FOREWORD

THESE memories were written for *The Christian Register*, and ran through twenty-nine numbers, from December, 1903 to April, 1904. Many friends had suggested in the later years that I should write some memoirs of my life and print them, or leave them in the care of my children to be printed after my death. I did not favor the idea. But when I came to the eightieth mile-stone of my pilgrimage, there was such an outpouring of greetings and congratulations from the Church of the Messiah, the sister churches and ministers, and from friends far and wide in my motherland and my homeland these fifty-eight years, that my heart was moved to do something in this sort, and it was done, not as memoirs — these I could not attempt — but as “some memories.”

May I say also that they stole out from the mists of time by no *effort* of memory, but as if they had been waiting for those quiet mornings when they were written, I dare not say by inspiration from on High, but will say the inspira-

## FOREWORD

---

tion of a grateful heart. I remember when my children were in their early "teens," and would bring me to book now and then, as the little maid in the memories caught me about the pan of milk. My small son, who must have been turning over a sermon on my desk, said to me, "Papa, do you write your sermons by what you call inspiration?" I answered, "I hope so, my son;" and then he said, "Why do you cross so much out?" He had caught me in a net and I had not the mother wit to answer. There may be an inspiration to cross out as true as the inspiration to let the rest stay on the paper. And now I love to remember these memories ran clear from the first number to the last. There was no "crossing out." They were so interwoven with my life through the fifty years they touch the sunshine and shadows, the sorrows and the joy.

ROBERT COLLYER.



## **SOME MEMORIES**



# SOME MEMORIES

## I

I was born on the 8th of December, 1823. My father was born in the same year and on the same day as the Emperor William of Prussia. My grandfather Robert was a sailor in Nelson's fleet, and my father would tell me how he sat on his shoulder to see the procession when they brought the body of the great admiral up the Thames for burial in St. Paul's Cathedral in London. This sailor man is the earliest ancestor on that side the house I can lay my hands on. He went to sea again very soon after Nelson's burial and was lost overboard in a storm; and my grandmother died soon after, leaving her family of, I think, five children who were taken to an asylum in the city of London for shelter and nurture. My mother's father was also a sailor. His port was Yarmouth, but the family lived in Norwich. He was also the earliest ancestor we can

## SOME MEMORIES

---

find on that side of the house. His name was Thomas Norman, and we take a touch of pride in our "Norman blood" and imagine we also may have come over with the Conqueror. He was lost at sea, and not long after his family of four children were left orphans and taken to an asylum in Norwich. So we have no family tree to speak of, only this low bush.

Very early in the last century there was an urgent need for children to work in the factories they were building then on all the streams they could find fit for their purpose in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The local supply of "help" could not begin to meet the demand; and so the owners of the factories went or sent south to scour the asylums where children were to be found in swarms, to bring them north and set them to work as apprentices, who must be duly housed, fed, and clothed until the girls were eighteen and the boys twenty-one. They must also be taught the three R's and the boys some craft by which they might earn their living when they were free. They found my father with some more in the asylum and carried them north to work in a factory on a stream called the Washburn and in the parish of Fewston. He told me they gave him the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

free choice to go or stay and wanted him to stay; but he said, "I will go." And so it was he went out, not knowing whither he went, was bound apprentice, and served his time first at the spinning-frames and then in the forge, for this was his choice of a handicraft. But here I touch a bit of romance. A few years ago when I was over in England I went on a visit to an old friend in Surrey who said to me one day: "Here is an invitation from Esquire Ellis, a good Unitarian, to come and drink tea with him. He is far on in years and lives in a fine old manor house. You will like to see where, as the tradition runs, Queen Elizabeth stayed once over night."

I was glad to go, had a very pleasant visit. And as we sat on the lawn under a grand old tree, chatting of many things, my good host said: "I have been told, sir, by your friend that you emigrated from Yorkshire to the United States. My family came south from Yorkshire many years ago where my father was partner in a linen factory. The firm was Colbeck & Ellis: the factory was in Fewston. You may have heard of the place." "Yes," I answered. "I worked in that factory, sir, seven years in my boyhood. My father was

## SOME MEMORIES

---

the smith there and worked in the factory, boy and man, thirty-two years. He was brought down from London and was bound apprentice to your father and Mr. Colbeck, I think it was in 1807." So there we sat, the sons of the master and apprentice, after eighty years, with a good warm grip of the hands.

I have said my mother was also an orphan in the ancient city of Norwich where the agents found her and brought her north to work as an apprentice in the same factory, and I think in the same year. So the lassie and laddie grew up together, each in their own 'prentice house, to manhood and womanhood. They were of about the same age, and it came to pass in due time that they fell in love with each other and were married by the good parson of the town at his church two miles away. And many a time my mother told us in a gust of glee how they had to walk there and back again through the January snow-drifts which were so high in spots that they were obliged to walk on the top of the stone walls.

I was their first-born. My father was working at the anvil in Keighley through the year after the wedding, so I was born there; but they offered him higher wages to return to the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

old place. So they would tell me how they carried me in their arms over the moors when I was a month old and went at once to keeping house. And there I find myself when I begin "to learn the use of I and me" in a cottage of two rooms and an attic, the windows looking right into the sun's eye over the valley and westward to the moors, and before the cottage a bit of greensward with a rose bush in the centre which bears a great wealth of roses (I held one to my face the other Sunday, and the perfume spanned the chasm for me of more than seventy years) and a plum-tree that gave me a good deal of trouble in those days because the fruit in the summer never began to make good the promise of the blossom in the spring.

Sir David Brewster brought a crystal to a meeting of *savans* which held in its substance a landscape taken æons ago by the sun. The picture was clear while you kept it in the dark, but began to fade exposed to the light. So the picture of my first home is a photograph and steals out sharp and clear through the mystery of remembrance. For now I go indoors where there are three and then five children sitting about a bright open fire. The walls of the living-room seem to be white as snow; and there

## SOME MEMORIES

---

is a bureau of mahogany that shines like a dim mirror through much polishing with what my mother called "elbow grease" over beeswax and turpentine, and chairs for the company,— but we sit on stools,— a tall clock which was always too fast for me at bedtime and too slow at meal-times, some pottery of the fine old willow pattern in a rack over the bureau (held sacred for Christmas and the village feast which fell in summer), and pictures Rubens could not have painted to save him. There was also clean linen and soft calico to wear next the body and to sleep in, and once a week — when we were old enough — a good, sound scrubbing in a tub with yellow soap that got into your eyes and a rough harden towel to dry us down. The wise man says in the Bible: "Who hath red eyes? Who hath contention? Who hath strife?" I can answer truly we had all these on the Saturday night when we were turned into that tub.

My dear good father's wages were about \$4.50 a week in our American tenor, and this was the whole income until we were old enough to help earn the living in the factory; but my mother made this income stand good for plenty to eat and drink, two suits of clothes (one for week-



## SOME MEMORIES

---

days and one for Sundays), house-rent, and fire-elding, and whatever we needed besides. And for food we had oatmeal porridge and skim-milk morning and night, with oat cake to fill in; a bit of meat usually for dinner, soup and potatoes, dumplings now and then of a fine staying power, and for a treat

“Stick-jaw pudding that tires your chin  
With — whatever it was — spread ever so thin;”

white bread always, with a film of butter on Sunday afternoon, and tea of the brand we call cambric. There were variations of course, but this was the rule. And I touch these memories because I believe in that fair sweet linen and the tub, the white purity of fresh lime laid on the walls every year with my mother's own hands, and in the food she gave us lies one momentous reason, if no more, for the verity that we children grew up healthy and strong, living to a good old age; while I myself have never been one day sick in my bed in these fourscore years or so far as I can remember had my breakfast there. We went to Sunday-school twice every Sunday, with no rewards and no picnics; and I really know of nothing in my boyhood outside my good home train-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

ing which can compare in pure worth to my teaching through seven years in that good orthodox Sunday-school. Or when I ask how it has come to pass that I have "wagged my pow in a poopit" in some sort these fifty-five years, and through forty-four years in the churches of our faith, my good home training, I say. For my father and mother made no "profession" of religion, but they held our home so sacred that I cannot remember one profane word passing their lips or ours; while the instinct lay so deep in my own nature that, when I became a preacher and might make them "tell" in a sermon, I still shrink from the words "devil," "hell," and "damnation."

Our birthright lay in the old parish church where my father and mother were married, and the children were all baptized by our good parson Ramshaw; but we only went there at Easter and Whitsuntide. The rest of the year we went to the small dissenting chapel on the hill. But the great holiday and festival in our home was Christmas, when we held a very carnival of good cheer.

It is true that as the festival drew near fear was not seldom blended with hope for us. We were never well-to-do, there were so many of us

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and our income was so small. So I can still see my mother sitting by the fire with a far-away look in her good gray eyes as we would talk about the coming festival, and can still hear her saying, "I fear we shall have no Christmas this year, 'childer,' things are so dear." And then life would seem to us not worth living. Still this was always, I think, a false alarm. The wolf never came so near the door as to devour our Christmas. The brave eyes would brighten and the able head begin to plan. There would be a bit of malt from the malster. This was the first move. Then the yule-cakes and the loaf would be made. How good they do smell still in the baking! And the cheese would be bought,—a small one, but always a whole cheese,—a bit of beef for the roast. We never attained to the splendor of a goose and the things for the plum pudding, but *we* never stoned the raisins.

Meanwhile up the stream at Thurscross — Thor's cross — the singers and the players on divers instruments had been busy for weeks preparing the Christmas carols; for they were musical up in the glen and had sung once in an oratorio, so it was said. And on Christmas morning, long before it was day, they would

## SOME MEMORIES

---

come down through the snow and sing for their first number the fine old hymn,—

“ While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down  
And glory shone around.”

(My old eyes grow dim as I listen to the music and the singing after all these years.) And we would rise in haste. The yule-log would be turned, the great candles lighted, the small barrel tapped, the yule-loaf and cheese set out. Largess would be given, with good wishes all round and the invitation to come again when Christmas came round. And along through the day the poor creatures would come with their carols,—God's poor. I have heard brave music and singing in all these years, the best there is; but as I sit here and listen to two of these I think I have never heard any singing besides so near the heart. It was the gift of God to *His* poor and was saved for Christmas. It was seldom you heard them at other times, but then it seemed as if they had listened to the angels. They knew nothing of music, but the charm was in the heart and they sang. They were very old carols, never rising as I hear them

## SOME MEMORIES

---

now so far away above some minor key. And this once in the year, if never again, they did eat and were satisfied as they went from house to house and closed their carols always with the same old strain,—

“God bless the master of this house,  
The misteriss also,  
And all the little children  
That round the table go.”

The Christmas tides in my early life were all in the homes. There were no festivals in the churches, no gifts from the altar, no doles for us from dead hands, and no sermons save when the day fell on Sunday. It was just Christmas, but so full of joy for young and old, so warm from the yule-fires and so fragrant with good cheer, that I wonder whether we have not lost track of something even in the great and generous bounty we pour out now,—something of the Home Christmas.

## II

I must lose no time about getting my education, so I was sent to a dame school near at hand. But after a while the dame set me to do things I loved better than my lessons, and when this came out there was trouble. My mother was not willing to have me work my passage and pay my school wage too. So she took me away, but not before I had learned one art at which I became a master, or so said the dame,— the way to scrape new potatoes. You take them out of fair water and remove the thin silken skin with your thumb. Then I went to a master's school half a mile away. He made me stick to my tasks in which I made some headway, while one little incident gives me a hint of my progress. I was in a temper; he must have scolded me. I made up my mind that he should see what I could do. One word on my battledore caught my eye, the word "good,"—one letter more than the rest on the line. I wrestled with that word amain, stood up by the desk, and spelled it out,— good, God! He gave me a small crack

## SOME MEMORIES

---

with the middle finger on the top of my head as my mother would with her thimble. His finger was hard as bone through much usage in this kind, and I never forgot the tap. The school was closed, the master went away, and I was old enough then to walk to another two miles away near the old church at Fewston where I was baptized. This was a good school, and Master Hardie was a good teacher, but was somewhat given to searching for the springs of what the elder English calls the humanities in the backward boys, as those who have "the gift" search for springs of water on the prairies with a hazel rod; and I think I was a backward boy. Still he lifted me along, doing his best for me; and some three years after this, when I was at work in the factory, he held a night school in our hamlet. I went there one winter and made good progress, climbing upward in figures to the rule of three. I went to a night school another winter after I left home to learn my craft, and this ends the story of my education in the schools.

Now I must return on my way to touch an incident which holds for me a pregnant meaning, as I glance backward to my childhood. The memory comes clear as if it was yesterday,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

of a happy day when some good soul had given me a big George the Third penny, and I must needs go and spend it forthwith, or, as my mother used to say, it would burn a hole in my pocket. There was only one store in our hamlet, and there I must go. I had quite made up my mind what I would buy. I dearly loved what we call candy,—do still; and there it was, the sort I would buy, in the window. But close to the jar there was a tiny book, and I can still read the title “The History of Whittington and his Cat. William Walker, Printer.” Price, one penny. I gave up the candy and bought the book. And now when I am in London and go up Highgate Hill to see a dear friend, I always halt to look at the stone on which the small boy sat when the bells rang him back again to become lord mayor of London.

Does some reader say, Why should you touch this incident? And I answer, I have a library now of about three thousand volumes, and in all these years have had to forego a sight of “candy” in many guises to get them; but in that first purchase lay the spark of a fire which has not yet gone down to white ashes, the passion which grew with my growth to read



## SOME MEMORIES

---

all the books in the early years I could lay my hands on, and in this wise prepare me in some fashion for the work I must do in the ministry.

Seventy-two years ago last summer the bell tapped for me to go to work in the factory where my father and mother had served their time. It is told of the younger Pitt that, in looking round for more earners and still more to meet the demands for more money and still more to carry on the war with Napoleon, the great statesman said, "We must yoke up the children to work in the factories." And this was done. I cannot vouch for the story; but there I was at work in the factory, with many more children of about my age or older, standing at the spinning-frames—"doffers" they called us—thirteen hours a day five days in the week, and eleven on the Saturday—rung in at six in the morning and out at eight in the evening, with an hour for dinner and a rest. And, if we got a chance to sit down for a few moments when the overlooker was not round with his leathern strap to lay on our small shoulders, we were in luck, while for protection we invented a code of signals to warn each other when he was coming our way; and the result of this was that the weaker children were so crippled

## SOME MEMORIES

---

that the memory of their crooked limbs still casts a rather sinister light for me on the scripture, "The Lord regardeth not the legs of a man." It was in 1831-32 I went to work on these terms, but in 1834 the burden was lifted by the Factory Act which barred out the children under nine years of age, while those over nine but under eleven must work no more than nine hours a day and at thirteen could work the full stint. This gave me a fine breathing space of about two years, and then I took the full stint with no harm; for the foundations were strong. Also in the hardest times the dear mother looked after me and the whole brood. The home was bright always when the day's work was done, and replete with all the good cheer her heart could compass for us. There was quite the minimum of "Thou shalt nots" in her tables of the law. She gave us our heads and held on to our hearts, and all was well. Dr. Bellows was introduced to her on his last visit to England. She was then far on in years, and the first time I met him after his return he said to me, "I know where you got your outfit: I saw your mother in Leeds."

On my first visit to the motherland fifteen years after I came to this new world, I went to

## SOME MEMORIES

---

look at the old factory and wandered about as one that dreams. I saw in one of the great dusty rooms a little fellow about eight years old, but big and strong for his years, standing at the spinning-frames through thirteen hours, tired sometimes almost to death, and then again not tired at all, rushing home when the day's work was done — if it was winter to some treasure of a book; and if it was summer, with the long twilights, the books would be perhaps neglected, and the rush would be out into the fields and lanes and down by the river, hunting in the early summer for birds' nests the tender and holy home canon would never permit to be robbed; and in the later summer seeing how the sloes, the crab-apples, and the hazel nuts fared, and what was the prospect for hips and haws.

I watched him in my day dream with a most pathetic interest. Dear old fellow, I said, you had a hard time; but then it was a good time, too, wasn't it now? How good the bread and butter did taste, to be sure, on Sundays, when half a pound a week was all your mother could afford! And did any flowers in this world smell as sweet as those old roses and the primrose, or prima donna sing like the skylark and the thristle! For you money cannot buy

## SOME MEMORIES

---

such a Christmas pudding or prayers and tears  
such a Christmas-tide as mother made and the  
Lord gave when you and the world were young.  
I had lost sight of you all these years and have  
never set eyes on you until to-day, you dear  
little other self who was dead and is alive again,  
was lost and is found!

One thing more I must touch before I leave  
these memories of the factory. I said the quite  
infernal factory bell began to clang through the  
valley at half-past five in the morning, before,  
as I was sure, I had been asleep an hour, so tired  
I was and so sure also that in all the world there  
could be no bell so harsh and evil in sound.  
Some years after our family moved to Leeds  
the factory fell on evil days and was dead.  
Then about 1870 the great city of Leeds must  
have more pure water, and bought the water  
rights to the Washburn with much land in the  
valley for reservoirs, including the site of the  
factory which must come down. When I read  
of this in my *Leeds Mercury*, I wrote to a  
friend in the Common Council, asking him to  
send me a bit of the old bell when it was broken  
up. I wanted to hammer it as Quilp in the  
story hammered the figure head to blow off his  
wrath. I received for my answer the bell

## SOME MEMORIES

---

sound and whole, laid down in the hall of our house, carriage paid to the door. But the dear house mother, who did not share my memories, did not want it cumbering the hall even when I suggested we might use it as a sort of Chinese gong to call us in the morning and to our meals. We could use a hammer and cover the head with leather, I insinuated. This would make a nice soft murmur. But mother would not hear me. I must get rid of that bell or she would. It was an elephant in the house.

It has been my happy fortune for more than twenty years to take the services and sermons once a year in Sage Chapel at the Cornell University, and, talking that year with President Adams about the training school for smiths' and carpenters' work, the thought flashed on me that I might foist the bell on the university and have it hung over the shops. The good fellow caught the idea with pleasure, though I told him honestly what an evil clamor it made for me all those years ago. "Send it up," he said, "and we will run our risk. It may be the clamor was in the hearing and not in the bell." So it was duly sent, and when I went up the next year he said: "The bell is hung, but has not been rung. We want you to strike the first

## SOME MEMORIES

---

sounds. So come right along and ring your bell." I rang it with a touch of tremor, and it seemed to be quite another bell; for it gave forth a pleasant sound. The president was right. The clamor was in my hearing when it would storm me out of what we call my first sleep. I cannot remember any second in those days, only one, and that all too brief.

I think it is Evelyn who says: "Being in Antwerp, I stood in the bell chamber while the bells were ringing, and the noise was full of dissonance and distraction. But the next morning I walked forth from the city when they rang again, and they were full of sweet harmonies." So the enchantment of time and distance, with all the good fortune which had come to me in the many years, had changed the clamor to this pleasant sound; and here ends the tale of my life in the factory.

### III

There was one article in our home creed that would admit of no doubt or denial: the boys must learn some craft better than those we were taught in the factory, and this would cost money, because they must find us in clothes through our apprenticeship, when we had no wages. But this made no matter, when the time came for me to leave home sixty-five years ago last August. If I stayed on in the factory, this would be a step down from the rank my father had attained as a smith. So it was ordained by the fireside council, of which I was a member, that I should be a smith too, and the money to clothe me would be found somehow, while my mother would stand true to her colors and her counsel,—“Childer, no matter how poor you be, when you have to do for yourselves, don’t look poor and don’t tell.” The smith who had taught my father was still living, and kept his forge in Ilkley, six miles away over the moor, and he agreed to take me as an ap-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

prentice. I was then turned fourteen and was bound until I was twenty-one, he giving me house room and food, week day shirts and leathern aprons. So in this way I came to work at the anvil, the utmost limit then and for many a year after of my ambition.

And the change was for the better in many ways. I was homesick for a time, as most boys are, and missed the home safeguards and sanctities; but the work was not so hard as a rule, and the hours were much shorter, for save when we were very busy we did not work more than ten hours a day, and Master Birch kept a good table, rough to be sure, but wholesome and plentiful, so that I began to grow apace and moved an old man to say, when he would step into the forge to warm his hands, "How thou does grow to be sewer: if thaa doesn't stop soin, we sall hev to put a stiddy [anvil] on thee heead." And then he would grin.

And this was not only an ampler life, but a wider world than that in which I was so far raised on the Washburn. So the environment was finer in many ways. Some readers of these memories may remember the lines of Wordsworth in which he makes a picture true to the life of the



## SOME MEMORIES

---

“Yorkshire dales, where warm and low the  
hamlets lie,  
Each with its little plot of sky and little lot of  
stars.”

The dale I left answers well to the picture, as Wharfedale does also in its upper reaches, but begins to open out where the town of Ilkley stands into wider holms and uplands, bound on the south by the “fine brow of crags” the poet Gray saw in a journey through the dale, and mentions this wise in one of his letters. The town also holds a fine historic interest, as I came to learn in the course of time. On this, however, I cannot dwell now, but may ask for room to tell the story, it may be, when these memories come to a close.

And now I will return to note that the spark struck out on the day when I bought the tiny book at prime cost was not as a fire enfolding itself, to be no more seen or heard of. It must have started a fire in my nature which has not yet burned down to white ashes; for, when I had learned to read to some purpose, I see myself in the far-away time and cottage reading, as I may truly say in my case, for dear life. There was a small store of books in our home, and among them Bunyan’s “Pilgrim,” “Rob-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

inson Crusoe," and Goldsmith's histories of England and Rome. These I may say I almost got by heart. The rest were religious books; they did not suit me, so I let them hang on the shelf, — more's the pity, do you say? And I answer, I am not so sure about that, because I think it was then I must have found the germ in those I did read of my lifelong instinct for the use of simple Saxon words and sentences which has been of some worth to me in the work I was finally called to do. And now when my work is almost done, and it may be the first sign of dotage is *anec-dotage*, may I give a little toot on the trumpet to help verify my surmise? A good many years ago, as I was walking down Broadway, a young gentleman said to me, "I am a student, sir, preparing for the ministry, and our president, Dr. Hitchcock, said to our class the other day we must go to the Church of the Messiah and hear you for your English, so I am coming." Pardon the toot.

My father noticed in good time my hunger for books, and, as there was no money to buy more, the dear good fellow began to borrow them from far and wide in our small commune. He found Burns and Shakespeare for me, with more I do not remember, and brought them

## SOME MEMORIES

---

home; but he laid down the law that I should not soil them, and should return them when they were well read to the owner, so I think the lenders had no reason to complain with our dear Sir Walter Scott that some of his friends were good *book-keepers*, but bad accountants.

Now I come to Ilkley again where in the first year of my 'prenticeship I found one of the friends that sticketh closer than a brother. He was some years my elder — ten I think — a workingman who never married, and was beyond all comparison the best read man and of the finest culture among the native men of the town. John Dobson — let me write his name for love's sake — was my whole college of professors, if I may use the term, through the twelve years of my life there as apprentice and then manager of the forge. There was no library where we could borrow books, so *he* must buy them out of his scant wages; for I had no money. This he would gladly do, sparing to spend, and bring them to me with shining eyes.

John was fond of Scotch metaphysics and other books of that school, and books which held arguments with you deep and vital, touching the eternal supremacy of mind over matter,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

the immanency of God and His adequacy to take care of the world He had made; the essays of John Foster, the eminent Baptist, Robert Hall, describes as a lumbering wagon laden with golden ingots; and the essays of Isaac Taylor, — these and many more, stories of dauntless fights for the soul's freedom, and most especially those of the old Scotch Covenanters. He reminds me now of Davie Deans in "Old Mortality," and considered MacCrie's answer to Sir Walter's misstatements about them of more worth than all the Waverley Novels.

He walked on foot to Scotland to visit the battlefield of Drumclog, for his main reason, and to see "The Solemn League and Covenant" signed with the blood of the saints; and went or came through Westmoreland, stealing near the home of Wordsworth without leave or license, and saw the old poet, almost blind then, seated on a chair in the sun, while his old wife came outdoors swiftly with a shawl to wrap about his shoulders.

If John Dobson had come into this world two hundred years or so earlier, he would have gone out with Black Tom Fairfax of Denton a mile or so down the river from Ilkley to the battle, but would have changed into the Ironsides before

## SOME MEMORIES

---

Marston Moor. And when, after his return from Scotland, he heard there was still a remnant left of the old Covenanters, I think only the good common sense which held him fair and true prevented him from returning to hunt them out and say, I am of your heart and mind. Half a dozen men all told owed more to John than to any other man.

The hunger for books grew by what it fed on. Two of my shopmates were hard drinkers, and Master Birch had fallen away from the grace of sobriety; but my love for books fought the fiend with a finer fire. For many years I never ate a meal, if I could help it, without a book at my elbow. I did worse than this, for when I went a courting I would still be reading; and if my sweetheart had not been the best lassie in all the world for me, as well as the bonniest, she would have given me the mitten, and served me right.

I had no dream of the worth which might lie in the hunger any more than that I should sit here this morning touching these memories while the soft thunder of this great city steals through my library. The worth lay in the reading in which not seldom I would "plunge soul headlong, impassioned by the beauty and

## SOME MEMORIES

---

salt of truth." And I still remember how I would climb up to the moor on Sunday afternoons in the pleasant summer-time with some book — I always went to the old church in the morning — sit down on one great gray crag to read a chapter and to watch the sunshine ripple over the heather like a great translucent sea, and listen to the music of the bells in the dark old tower at Haworth meet and mingle with the music from the tower of our own church below where the Longfellows worshipped through some centuries of time. Then something I had read would set me thinking and talking back, as we say, with no audience but the moor sheep looking up in wonder as they fed.

Then the memory comes of a change through a great sorrow which befell me, when my life was dark in the shadows of death, for which I found no help in books and must find help in God. I did not consult with flesh and blood, not even with my dear friend and good helper John. The whole experience seemed too sacred. The secret lay between God and my own soul, and seems still so sacred that I hesitate over these lines.

But in about a month my heart was quiet. I had found rest in Him, and then must needs find

## SOME MEMORIES

---

fellowship among those who were like hearted;  
for the great woman well says:

“On solitary souls the Universe  
Looks down inhospitable, and the human heart  
Finds nowhere shelter but in human kind.”

## IV

There was a band of Methodists, my old neighbors and friends, who met in a small chapel. There I went and told them in not many words how it was with me. They wondered first and then gave me a warm welcome. I had found out that one stick is not good for a fire. I knew how they would have loved to have a share in my conversion, open and above board, with Hallelujahs and Amens; but there I was, take me or leave me. They were not over-particular about the sticks if they would burn well, while in the burning a certain gift of speech came I must have inherited from my mother, in the prayer and class meetings, of which this was the upshot. In about a year the preacher in charge of the churches came to see me and told me how the brethren in the quarterly meeting on the previous Monday had risen one by one and said it had been borne in upon their hearts that I had a call to preach the gospel. They were local preachers,



## SOME MEMORIES

---

with a gift for this work, and rustical men, with one exception, who made their own living as artisans and small farmers, and preached on Sundays for the love of God and of human souls, while some of them answered well to the canon of the great Swiss reformer, "A man who is truly called to preach the gospel *may* know many things, but must know two,— God and how to speak to the people."

Shall I say that there have been moments in my life when what "Friends" call "the inward light" has shone or flashed for me on turning points always as I see now? Well this was one, and the first. I told good old Michael that I should be glad to try, and he said I must be ready when he called. So I went home to think out a sermon from the text, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner."

The word came duly that I must preach at the chapel in Addingham three miles up the river. It was Sunday afternoon. Luther loved to preach on Sunday afternoons because the men servants and maid servants could come to hear him then in great numbers, but I found only a handful. And here I must make confession. The sermon was divided into three parts: the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

firstly and lastly were my own, the secondly I stole from a sound Scotch divine.

I must have no paper, so I had none, but managed somehow to get through. There was no greeting from the hearers as I came out of the chapel to go home; but half way there I halted, for I found I had quite forgotten the secondly I had stolen. And then came the painful conclusion that it served me right, and my text should have been by good rights, "Thou shalt not steal," while from that time to this I may say in all honesty I have stood true to Paul's words, "Let him that stole steal no more."

There was no inward light for me then. I had meant to do a mean thing and had failed, but by heaven's grace the failure opened the way to my ordination as a Methodist local preacher. I felt no great eagerness to try again: my sin had found me out. They did not know my secret, and old Michael sent me on a Sunday soon after to preach in a farmer's kitchen, on the lift of the moor, where they only had preaching now and then, and where I may suppose he thought poor provision might pass where the feasts came few and far between.

It was in June. I see the place still, and am aware of the fragrance of the wild uplands

## SOME MEMORIES

---

stealing through the open lattice on bars of sunshine, to mingle with the pungent snap of the peat fire on the hearth which gives forth the essence of the moorlands for a thousand years. And I still mind how heavy my heart was that afternoon. I had been trying all the week to find a sermon in a parable; but there was no pulse to answer, no vision, and Bishop Horne says, "If you distil dry bones, all you will have for your pains is water."

Still there I was, *the preacher*, and they were simple-hearted folk up there, of the old Methodist election unto grace, eager and hungry for the word of life, and ready to come in with the grand Amens.

The big farm kitchen was full, and they were just the hearers to help a poor soul over the sand bars on the lift of their full hearts. So they sang with a will; and where in all the world will you hear such singing with a will as in Yorkshire and Lancashire! Then I must pray. Father Taylor said, "I cannot *make* a prayer," nor can I. But, with those hearts filled from the springs of life, I felt that day the prayer was making me. Then the time came for the sermon. Some stammering words came to my lips, and then some more, while

## SOME MEMORIES

---

gleams of light began to play about my parable. And their eyes began to shine, while now and then the grand Amens came in as a chorus from the chests of men who had talked to each other in the teeth of the winds up there from the times of the Saxons and the Danes. And now after all these years I feel sure it was given me that day what I should say.

So the service ended, and the good man of the house came, laid his hands on me, and said very tenderly: "My lad, the Lord has called thee to preach the gospel. The Lord bless thee and make thee faithful in the truth." And all the people said Amen, while I have always said that this was my true ordination.

The service on the moor side and ordination from the hands and heart of the good old farmer helped me greatly to feel that I had a call to preach, and, if I was true to my calling, need not flinch from any Scot or lot for such sermons as I could compass. But I feel sure also that I was exalted above measure and needed to have my thorn in the flesh to buffet me. Well, this was what befell me.

The minister in charge sent word that I must preach on the next Sunday evening at our own chapel in Ilkley, and I was proud of the ap-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

pointment. They should see what I could do. I do not remember the text or the sermon now, only that I was rather proud of the effort. But on the Monday morning, as I was going down to the forge, I met one of the members of the small society, a shoemaker, and a thoughtful man, who said: "I went to hear thee preach last neet. Would thou let me tell thee what I think of thy sermon?" "Yes," I answered, feeling almost sure I should hear a word of commendation; but there was no such word. "I think thou will never mak a preacher like what we want," he said. "Thou wants to reason ower much, and that will never do. We want our preachers to preach from the heart, not from the head: to say, 'Thus saith the Lord,' and be sure about that. Thy preaching may do for some folks, but it winnat do for us." Then good old Tom went his way, and I went mine. I was not glad for the thorn, yet I have thought many a time since then he was not a messenger of Satan sent to buffet me, but a very honest man who said what he most surely believed.

And here again I must anticipate this incident in my memories. Seventeen years after, when I was a minister in our own denomination, of about six years standing, I crossed the ocean

## SOME MEMORIES

---

on my first visit to the motherland and my mother, and of course must go to Ilkley: was there over a Sunday and met my messenger on his way to the chapel. I greeted him gladly, but he said, "I don't know ye, sir." So I told him my name, and after chatting some moments he said, "I am ever so pleased to see ye, sir. I am going t' chapel, and the preacher has sent word he cannot come, he is badly. Ye were a local when ye left us: do ye preach a bit still?" "Yes," I answered, "I am still a preacher." "Then ye will come and take our man's place. We shall be ever so glad to hear you again after all these years." Then I told him I was no longer a local, but was settled over a church in Chicago of quite another brand. The old man's face fell as he said, "What made ye leave us?" I asked him if he remembered telling me I should reason myself out of the Methodist body if I did not change my methods, and I thought his words had come true. We clasped hands, said good-bye, and I saw the old man no more on the earth.

The old miller in the town also gave me a piece of his mind after my first effort. He said I should make a preacher in time, and be right

## SOME MEMORIES

---

useful; for they would use me for a spare rail to fill the gaps, and we needed such a rail to keep things straight. There was scant time for the preparation of the sermons so called. I went to see Dr. Dewey for love's sake when he was near the end of his long life, and saying something as we sat in his study about the high worth to us of his sermons, he looked up and said, "I do not call them sermons: I call them things — only things."

So I may well call mine "things"; and, scant of time for close study, I must find some other way to my purpose then and through the ten years of my time as a local preacher here and in England, while I was still at work in the forge, and the problem in some sort was solved in this way. When I would be hard at work for all I was worth, some thought I had harbored would suddenly grow luminous, touching earth or heaven, would be as the seed which groweth secretly, and there would be no great trouble when the time came for the reaping. Or the idea would still elude me, coming and going as the winds come and go, giving me sometimes sore distress, yet for the things worth the pain there would be a day of redemption, when the



## SOME MEMORIES

---

thought I could not capture captured me, and turned the croak I had feared I must make into a new song.

One of these songs of deliverance still haunts my memory. I had walked to Burnsall twelve miles up the river to take the services in the chapel, and then walk home ready for my work in the morning. The new song carried me away captive, so that I took no note of time, and as nearly as I can remember sang my way through a good ninety minutes. It was a sore imposition. When an eminent judge was asked how long he thought a sermon should be, he answered, "Twenty minutes, with a leaning to the side of mercy." And when a young fledgling in our dale told the minister he believed he had "a call," and took for his text "I am the light of the world," an aged sister, all out of patience with him, after some time cried out, "John, if thou's the light of the world, I think thou needs snuffin'." So did I, no doubt, that Sunday evening, and I have never done the like again in all these years. And yet it is hard to draw the line, for a sermon of an hour shall seem shorter from one man than a sermon of twenty minutes from another. On my life in the forge as boy and man I must not dwell, because these mem-



## SOME MEMORIES

---

ories are of my ministry in their main purpose. And to tell the clean truth, I think I was never a very good blacksmith, not nearly so good as my father; for to do anything supremely well you must give your whole mind to it, yes, and your heart, and these for me were given to the books. Still, as manager of the forge after the old master died, I could command the highest wages and believe I gave worth for worth, while one bit of work that I can lay my hands on is still to be seen. I must make a pair of iron gates. This sort of work is done by the white-smith; but I took the job with no proper tools or skill for that work, and the result was a pair of gates as homely as a barn door,—so homely that I would dream of them after I came to this new world, and say to myself, If I can ever afford the money, I will ask to have a new pair made by some skilful man over there, and the old things sold for scrap iron.

But just a touch of satisfaction came to me on my last visit to the homeland a few years ago, when the humor took me to go and have another (and it may well be the last) look at the gates I had made just fifty years before. The touch of satisfaction lay in the fact that not a rivet had sprung in the clanging back and

## SOME MEMORIES

---

forth through all the years. Those on the lock had sprung, but that was set by another man. So I said, I have so much to the good in any case. And when I came home, being in Chicago on a visit, President Harper asked me to come and speak to some of the students; and I wove in the story of my gates, of which the moral was, "No matter how homely your work may be in this world, look well, my boys, to the rivets."

## V

In 1849 I had made up my mind to emigrate to this new world. I had dreamed for some years of doing this when I was able. My father and mother had made up their minds to come when they were married; but the panic of 1823-24 had struck England like a bolt from the blue and slain their hope, while among my earliest memories this still stays clear of sitting by the fireside and listening as they would talk of their dead or dying hope. They had heard from Tom Ross, one of my father's shopmates, who had come here and was doing well. They would talk of Tom and then of their regret. So I think the seed was sown then which came in good time to the harvest.

When it was known that I was to emigrate, a gentleman of note came to see me and said, "You will go to Canada of course, and I will give you letters to friends in Montreal or in Australia, if you choose to go there." But, thanking him, said I was going to the United States. "You have friends there," he said,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

But I answered, "I do not know a soul there." And no doubt he thought I was standing in my own light.

But this was the truth: the light lay on these States, the inward light I must mind without debate, and have followed these many years. I was alone. The great sorrow I touched in one of these memories rested in the death of my wife eighteen months after our wedding. We were of those who marry young. I was in no haste to marry again; but now the time had come to find a helpmeet and the woman who was to be by far my better half through more than forty years,—how well I know this now!

And just for the humor of it, when we talked of our life together, I would say I won her heart through a sermon from the text, "The spirit and the bride say, Come," while she would answer, "I could have no great opinion of the woman you would win by that sermon."

We made the sacred vows in mid April, 1850, and went at once to Liverpool to take our passage for New York on the old liner Roscius, where we landed in four weeks to the day. I had read all the books I could find about this strange land to me—the prospect for good work and wages—but wanted to know more

## SOME MEMORIES

---

about the people, their spirit and temper, and if they were what we call "folksy." So I had walked some miles to see a kinsman of my wife who had come over three times to seek his fortune, but had by no means found it, poor fellow! I told him my errand, and of our intention to emigrate and make a new home in this new world. "I hear you have been there three times. Please tell me all you can about the people you found there. Are they kind and well disposed toward an Englishman, a working man and a stranger?" "No," he answered in his broad Yorkshire, "they are nayther. Wha, they'll tak the varry teeth out o' yer heead if ye doant keep yer moath shut!" I noticed he had lost some, so this was not quite encouraging; but there we were after four weeks at sea, drawing up to the wharf in New York, and must go ashore and run our risk. We stood ready to land when I heard a man speak to another in our own tongue — broad Yorkshire — and, speaking to him, I found he kept a tavern and was seeking guests. He asked us to go there, and we were glad to go; for we knew your Yorkshire man down to the ground.

In the night my wife was taken ill, and in the morning I went out to find the medicine she

## SOME MEMORIES

---

wanted. I found by direction of our host a drug store on Broadway across from the City Hall Park, told the man in charge what I wanted, and he presently began to talk to me, man fashion. Had I just landed? Where was I from? What was my business? And I answered him, but thought the while, This may be the way we lose our teeth. I must see what he charges. "How much, sir?" I said. And he answered: "Not a cent. Glad to do it. Come in again and let me know how you are getting along if you stay in New York." This was my first lesson: the first thing I bought in this new world I must not pay for.

Our destination was Philadelphia. I could not tell you why that day, but can now if there were time and space beyond this. The light lay on that city, and there we must go. We started after two days by the way of South Amboy and the Delaware, the cheapest route. It was a lovely mid May morning as we went down the river. The orchards were in full bloom. It was the most beautiful land I had ever laid my eyes on! Our host in New York had told us of a tavern kept also by a Yorkshireman, and we went there.

I must lose no time finding work, for our

## SOME MEMORIES

---

funds were low. It was the first time in my life I must *seek* work and hurt my pride; but I was spared the pang, for the work sought me. I saw an advertisement in the *Ledger*,—"Wanted, a blacksmith. Apply to No. 5 Commerce Street,"—and there I hastened. The forge was in the country, seven miles away, and I must go out there by the old York road the next morning. It was one of those burning days that come in mid May. I was just clear of the city, plodding along, when a gentleman passed me rather swiftly in a carriage and pair, halted presently, and when I came into line with him asked me where I was bound. "A place called Shoemaker town, sir," I answered. And then he said: "I am going that way. Get in and have a ride this hot day." I was rising twenty-seven. It was the first time in my life any gentleman had asked me to come in and ride with him. He also wanted to know about my whence and whither. I told him of my hopes, but not my fears. He told me I was sure to prosper, with much besides, clasped my hand when we parted in good, frank fashion,—sorry he could not take me to the forge a mile away,—and I never saw him again.

## SOME MEMORIES

---

One more memory remains of our first experience among the greedy and grasping folk over here who would have my teeth. When I left the city, my good helpmeet said she must find work also with her needle, and help earn the money for our new home when we got one. There was an intelligence office free for emigrants near the tavern on Front Street near Market in the care of a Mr. Thomason, a Presbyterian clergyman, whose health had given way in New Orleans, and he said, "My wife wants some sewing done, so you will come to our house." So my dear wife went there and worked some days, but then was taken down with a fever she had no doubt caught on the ship. It was of a bad type. There were, I think, four children in the home. There would be peril if she was kept there, and the right thing to do would be to send their charge to the hospital. I still think this never entered into their minds. Mrs. Thomason isolated her in a sweet, bright room in the house, called in their own doctor, took care of her with no nurse to help, and, when I went to the city at the week's end, they said I must be their guest, and come there until my wife was well able to join me, and we could start our home in good fashion.



## SOME MEMORIES

---

And when we were ready to go we said: "We can never cease to be your debtors for this care and kindness, but you have been at a serious expense also. This we must repay." I was in good work at good wages. We would lose no time. We could help. For this we pleaded, but they would not hear us for a moment. Not a penny should we pay them: much more they said. And then the dear old man laid his hands on us and gave us his sweet benediction. The measure was full. This was the answer to the cousin's caution touching the greedy and selfish Americans.

## VI

My work in the forge for almost nine years was making claw-hammers, at a stated price per dozen. This was a new craft. I had never made a claw-hammer until then in my life; but in the twelve years' training I had got what we call a good ready, and piece work puts a man on his mettle. Old veterans in the anti-slavery crusade may still remember an illustration Mr. Garrison was rather fond of using in his speeches touching the sound of the hammer in the forge when you were working by the day or the job—"by the day — by the da-ay — by the da-a-ay," the one hammer said, and the other, "by the job, job, job." So you need not ask on what terms each man was working.

We were working by the job, and I soon caught the fine contagion. So this was the result: I earned double the wages in the first month that I was paid as foreman in the old forge in Ilkley. But this is also true, that I worked, I may venture to say, twice as hard

## SOME MEMORIES

---

in the new forge as we ever thought of working in the country smithies of the old homeland.

We lost no time in finding a home the best we could afford; but in about a year we found one much better, in a lovely green lane, away from the forge, where we lived until we moved West in 1859. We were strangers there as when we landed in the city seven miles away. No soul knew us or knew of us; but they took us in not as the cousin said they would, but in the good Scripture fashion, so that we soon began to feel quite at home among them. It was a new land and a new life, but so good and fair that I can truly say there was no day or moment in a day, when we wanted to return to the life we had left, nor has there been one in all these years.

We sought no friends: they came to us of their own free will. And I think it was on the first day in our new home the good woman, our next-door neighbor, came in with a dish of stewed tomatoes, and said: "I wonder if you know how good 'tomatusses' are? We have more than we can use, and I thought you would not feel offended if I should bring some in." We were not offended.

The people on the farms were mainly Ger-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

mans of the third or fourth generation, with a sprinkling of English who had come over in Penn's time and taken up the land. There were a good many "Friends" also, but they were not very friendly. Their soul was like a star and dwelt apart, with the exception of one old lady well up among the nineties, who came over painfully on her crutch to greet us. She was a maiden in the days of the Revolution, and could tell us no end of stories of those far-away times, touched here and there by a fine imagination. Another neighbor, old Michael, was of a good German stock that stays by the land and old usage. Michael would only plant his onions at the increase of the moon. "Did you ever see Washington?" I said to him one day. "Yes, indeed I did," he answered, "and it were this way. We lived in Germantown when I were a boy, and one day I saw Gen. Washington coming along our lane. So I waited until he come near where I were standing, and then I took off my cap and made the best bow I knew how to; and he looked down at me a-smiling, patted me on my head, and said, 'fine lump of a Dutch boy.' And what do you think of that?" Alexander Wilson, the early and eminent ornithologist and

## SOME MEMORIES

---

poet.— not eminent — taught a school a mile away from our home when the last century was born. Michael's folks had moved to our vill, I found, about that time. So I said to him on another day, "Did you ever go to school, sir, to a teacher by the name of Alexander Wilson?" "I did," he answered promptly. "And do you remember anything you would call queer about him?" "Yes, and it was this: out of school hours he were always poking among the bushes after birds and birds'-nests." I told him then of the grand book the master had made all about our birds. It was a great surprise: he had never heard of the book. And now I am glad to remember this glint of light I got at first hand from old Michael, of which the kinsfolk of the great ornithologist, here or in Scotland, who read the *Christian Register* — or ought to — will be glad to make a note. And the tiny picture of Washington patting the "fine lump of a Dutch boy" on the head is more to me than some eulogies I have heard in my lifetime of the most noble and simple man.

It was in mid May I went to work at the forge, where I was earning good money; and then in July we came to a standstill. The old

## SOME MEMORIES

---

boiler must be replaced by a new one, our fires were blown by fans; and this meant no more work at the anvil for three weeks or a month. I could not afford to wait. The margin of my earnings had gone for the outfit of the small home. I must find work, and went to making hay two weeks for a neighbor. And, when the hay was in, I said to our employer, "Mr. Hammond, can you give me a job on the boiler?" I thought he did not like to say the only work he could give me was to carry a hod for the bricklayers, but so it was. And I said, "I am your man." It was a full week's work. I earned six dollars. It was through a ragged hole in the wall I must carry my hod, and there were many new bumps on my head at the end of that week when the dear helpmeet said, "Well done!" and — Well I will not say what she did besides.

Seventeen years after, in the heart of the summer, they were building our new church in Chicago, which was burnt in the great fire of 1871. And I stood on a beam one day on the first floor when a sturdy Irishman came along with a hod full of bricks, halted near me for some moments, wiping his face, and said, "This is hard work, sur." "Yes," I answered, "I

## SOME MEMORIES

---

know. I have carried a hod myself in my time." The good fellow looked hard at me for a moment, shouldered his hod, and went his way, saying something I did not hear. I went to work at my anvil then for a seven years' spell, and as I became more clever I earned more money, \$50 a month all told in the cool months. And then in October, 1857, the great panic of that year struck us like a bolt from the blue. The fires went out, the forge was closed, and no stroke of work was done until the spring of 1858, when we were able to make half-time.

Mr. Hammond, our employer, could not even guess how long the panic would hold us in its cruel grip. There were three young children by this time about the mother's knee. We had saved some money and should have saved more, but I had been laid off for a spell with a broken arm and again with a splint of steel in my eye. The dear housemother had also been sick for weeks together through those years. So the margin of savings was small and would not begin to see us through the winter, and now we must trust in Him who heareth the young ravens when they cry. Of course I must not fold my hands and wait for the help of God, I must *hustle*. I use the word because I like it. So

## SOME MEMORIES

---

I mind how I helped to dig a well and worked on the turnpike. A gentleman many years after told me he saw me breaking stones, but this I do not remember. We did what we could, the mother and I, minding my old mother's caution,—“Don't look poor and don't tell.” And then help came without our asking.

I was making some slim purchase at the one store—for we were cutting down—when Albert Engle, the owner, said: “You must not scrimp your family for anything we have in our store. The work will start up again, and you will pay me, I know, when you are able.” Charles Bosler, the miller, came to see me, and said: “Come to my mill for all the flour and meal you need. I can trust you.” And good George Heller followed suit about the rent. They are now no more. They made good the ancient promise, “Before you ask I will answer.” And so I must record their names in my book of life. And then, when the time of the singing of birds had come and the grapes gave a goodly smell, the fires were lighted again and the hammers rang on the anvils. How well I remember the day when I made my first dozen hammers after that panic! I stood at the anvil about two years more, and then laid



## SOME MEMORIES

---

down my hammer for good and all, except for some fragment of an hour about twelve years after. But this memory belongs to our life in Chicago.

## VII

No word has been said touching those years about the work I must do on Sundays, because I felt this must wait until the story was told of, shall I say, the bread and butter, the roof and the fire. While here also there was a panic which must be met and overcome not by the help of men now, but I say in pure reverence of the Most High. I brought a good letter from the brethren in England to the churches here of our faith and order; and soon after we landed in Philadelphia, dropping into a book store — I was sure to do that — found the bookseller, Thomas Stokes, was a Methodist and a local preacher. I took out my letter, and, Methodist fashion, he gave me at once the right hand of fellowship; asked me to go with him to church on the next Sunday, where I was presented to the minister, who was also glad to read my letter and welcome me. There was a prayer meeting after the regular service, and I was asked to “make a prayer.” And, as we walked from the church, my friend said:

## SOME MEMORIES

---

“ I feel sure that was a good prayer, but we did not understand the half of what you said. I suppose you spoke in the Yorkshire dialect. You will have to speak as we do here in America if you are a local preacher.”

I had never thought of this, had indeed rather prided myself on my good English. And it was not broad Yorkshire, but Brother Stokes did not know that. And no matter what it was, there was the truth: it was not good American. This was clear. Here was another panic. If I must learn the new tongue and forget the old before the people would hear me, rectify the aspirates, change the accents, alter the vowels, and all the rest, when could I begin to be heard at all? This was the situation when we had got our home in order and joined the church near at hand in Milestown, where again they gave us a warm welcome. So did the minister in charge of the circuit: but he also had heard me speak in a meeting, had admitted me to the band of local preachers, but had given me no chance to stand in a pulpit. Then I think I was angry; but it was not a sinful anger if I may judge from this distance in time, and, after waiting, it may be, two months, I set a snare for his feet.

## SOME MEMORIES

---

I had noticed he was rather given to ask a brother of our rank to take the service when he was tired or had a very small audience, and small blame to him. He was to preach in a small schoolhouse on a blazing August Sunday afternoon on the hill above our town. So I went to the service in the hope that he would invite me to take the service and risk the dialect. He did risk it, the good, innocent man! for he was both. And I am not sure there was any overplus of the divine grace in me; but I felt the question must be settled that day, whether I must be what the Scotch call a stickit minister until I learned how to speak, or win against the formidable hindrance.

And at my work I had mused over those words of the prophet until my heart burned,—“Get thee up in thy chariot, for there is a sound of abundance of rain.” I forgot all about the dialect, so did the small band about us. The farmer’s kitchen on the moorside and the small schoolhouse on the hill opened each into the other. My brothers in the ministry will know what I mean. It was given me that day what I should say. In my poor measure and degree it was as when in the old time they spake to every man in his own tongue. I was

## SOME MEMORIES

---

in the spirit on *that* Lord's Day. How I should love to feel that burning once more before I die! We speak of some event or experience as worth a year of our life. I think the worth of that afternoon has gone into all the years since then. After the benediction Brother Taft gave me a fine grip of the hand, and said, "Brother, you shall have all the work you want to do." And the promise was kept. After some time a church was built on the hill, and then there were four in the circuit. I took my turn and turn about in them all through the nine years. Slowly but surely I caught the new tongue in some measure; for I have a pliant and sensitive ear and was much pleased when, after I had mastered the speech, an old man said to me: "I did not understand you for a long time when you came to preach for us, but I felt good. So I always came to hear you." Still I am not sure that I am already perfect in this tongue; for within a month, on a Sunday morning after the sermon, a lady came forward and said, with tears in her voice, "I am from Yorkshire, sir, and was so glad to hear the dear old burr here and there in your discourse."

## VIII

As I touch these memories of the old time, I would fain feel that I am as one who sits by the fireside in the evening, and talks with his old friends not in monologues, but in conversation of the give and take. Then when I notice here and there a man — it is always a man — lift his hand toward his face to hide a yawn, I think it is time to shut up and shut down. So they go home, to drop in again, and then there are more memories and more, until the tale is told in the evenings at home. The last of these closed with the remark of my old friend, that, in the early years when he heard me speak, he did not understand the half of what I said, but he *felt good*; and this I take to be the truth touching a good many beside old Robert. But in no long time there was always a good congregation in each of the chapels to hear me, no matter about the aspirates and accents or the way I had of putting things. William Jay of Bath in England, a very eminent minister in his time, would say to the students for the ministry, “Do

## SOME MEMORIES

---

not be afraid of using 'likes' in your sermons: the people like to hear them, and that was the Master's way who taught the people by parables." So my great hunger for reading all the books I could lay my hands on stood me now in good stead, and drew the folk about me. Moreover, there were times when the fire burned as in the schoolhouse on the hill and the farmer's kitchen on the moorside, and there was a song of deliverance which helped all round.

It was within a year also of this ministry that a fine old farmer halted his team at our door, on his way to the city, to see if I would come for a Sunday to preach in their church some six miles away in another circuit. They had heard about me, and were eager, he said, to hear me. So I accepted the call without demur. Nothing was said about transport, though it was a stiff walk; but this made no matter, for in those days it was about as easy for me to walk as to sit still,—the good days that are no more. So I went, and found a good audience, of sorts, to hear or see me; but on opening a ragged Bible to find my lesson, it was not to be found, the lesson or the text, and I used no manuscript. So I took what there

## SOME MEMORIES

---

was left and went through with the service, perhaps with a touch of temper. They thanked me with warmth when the service was over, and asked me to come again soon. "Yes," I answered, "I shall be glad to come again when I am free," but told them my bother with the old Bible, and said, "I cannot come again until you get a new one." So this they promised they would do, and made their promise good.

The trouble I found was this, in talking with my host: the church was endowed with an income of about three hundred dollars a year, if my memory holds good, and this was no blessing, but a bane, because it tapped the springs of their own striving and giving, though they were well-to-do farmers in the main. So the church was as poor as Job's turkey,—I get the similitude from my mother.

There was no fee of course, but all the same there was a rich reward. I found the town had a library in which my host held a share he did not use; and, finding out, with no great trouble, my passion for books, he said, "I shall be glad if you will use my share, with no cost to yourself, sir." So most gladly I accepted the gift. There was no money to spare for books in our home. We had brought over about



## SOME MEMORIES

---

twenty volumes, and these were precious; and my pen pauses here as I try to reckon all the money I spent in books through the nine years at the anvil, and I cannot make it amount to ten dollars. Here the dear house-mother put her foot down: the money was wanted in the home. And she held me so well in hand that I remember laying out not quite a dollar in a very thick volume of Littel I could not resist, but durst not bring in under my arm. So I hid it under a currant bush until the next morning, and arose up early to smuggle the thing into the house. It was some days before my guardian saw it in my hand, and said, "My dear, where did you get that book?" And I answered softly, "Why, I have had this book some time." Which was in some sort true: I had owned the book a whole week. Tennyson, in "The Grandmother," says,—

"A lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies";

but I do not feel the sting. The mother smiled, but said no more. I was forgiven: we were good at forgiving, my wife and I.

The free pass for the library was a great boon. Here was a fine wealth of American

## SOME MEMORIES

---

books, and English also, I had not read. One Christmas-tide, when I was still a lad, I could not be spared from the forge to go home, so this was a sore disappointment the goose to our dinner did not heal; and I was sitting by the fire in the evening in quite a grim mood, when a neighbor came in with a couple of volumes in his hands he put into mine very kindly, saying, "I notice, Robert, thou's fond o' reading, and here's a book I think thou will like." It was Irving's "Sketch-book." I just devoured the volumes read by the fire-light that evening until bedtime, and forgot all about my lost Christmas. This was the first American book that had come into my hands, and it went into my heart to stay, while I wonder still whether this was not a silken thread to draw me hitherward. Then a volume of Longfellow's Poems came to my hands, and I think I could place my feet to-day exactly on the line where I halted to read "The Psalm of Life" in a journey of three miles.

So these were my familiar friends; but here in the library was a fine store I could read to my heart's content, where the New World's literature clasped hands with the Old. The library was some six miles from our home; but I would overpass my stint of hammers in some

## SOME MEMORIES

---

week, make time to go browse in the library, and bring home more books, and then I wist not how far it was home again, for I read the whole way.

## IX

In no long time after this the men in the forges, together with a few young farmers, called a meeting in the schoolhouse for the purpose of starting a lyceum in which questions of moment should be discussed by the members, *sans peur et sans reproche* (dear reader, I have stolen this from Worcester's Dictionary); and for a time there was no fear and no reproach, nor would have been if they had left us free to handle questions close of kin to the first proposed,—“Which are the most beautiful, the works of art or the works of nature?”—harmless as new milk and honey. But men from the city came in who cared for none of these things, and were by no means content to leave us to our own devices. Emerson says, or sings,

“The old wine darkling in the cask  
Feels the bloom of the living vine.”

I ventured once to show him the figure in Butler's “Hudibras” in very near the same words, and he said he had never seen or heard

## SOME MEMORIES

---

of the lines to the best of his recollection. This was the early spring-time of evolution and the truth of the descent of man. The question was proposed for discussion in a speech far too long, I thought, by a gentleman from the city. We were not prepared to admit the question, only to condemn the whole heresy from Alpha to Omega. The creation of this world in six days, the story of the making of man, and the woman from his rib, and the fall and what followed,—he whistled these down the wind. These things were myths, he said, or poems or what not. Man had not fallen, but had won his way from the monad to the eminence on which we stood. Well, I for one was amazed. This was the most frightful heresy I had ever heard. If my memory is true, I was the only man who tried to frame an answer, and was indeed the only man who stood in a pulpit on the Sunday as a Christian teacher. The ministers gave us a wide berth. They did not believe in free platforms. So I stood alone, and not content to scold; for I think this was the staple of my speech. I must needs try satire in verse, or, as Douglas Jerrold said once of a friend's effort, in worse, of which I happily remember only these lines our good editor may prudently sup-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

press. They were suggested by a complaint my fine heretic had made in our lasting meeting about the mosquitoes in which I took their part: —

If your theories hold good,  
Man was a muskeeter,  
So we're all one flesh and blood,  
Only you're compleeter.  
I may hope to be a man  
In the good time coming:  
Now we're working to your plan,  
Letting blood and humming.

I should be a bit ashamed to recall the doggerel if I did not remember things from dignitaries of the Church not much better as an answer to the truth of evolution which since that time has grown so radiant to the mind of thoughtful men.

Shall I say now that another question sprung on us not willingly, but perforce because ours was still a free platform, was this, "Are the Garrisonian Abolitionists entitled to the confidence and support of the American people?" This was a burning question then, and it set the lyceum afire. I hated slavery as a certain personage was said to dislike holy water. My dear father, when he was a young man, went

## SOME MEMORIES

---

without sugar in his tea for a long spell, and gave the money he saved to help free the slaves in the West Indies, though he loved the sweetening as he loved his pipe, which he could not give up. So there was an inborn instinct, it may be, of revolt at the curse. I remember also that my employer's son lent me "Uncle Tom's Cabin" when it was published, and I sat up one whole night and until past midnight on the next after a full day's work to read the story.

But the brotherhood in the church and conference fought shy of the question as a rule, with some noble exceptions, while especially it was never mentioned in the pulpit for good or evil in the whole nine years by the ministers in charge of our four churches.

I went into the debate as a duck goes into the water, but argued the best I knew for the gradual abolition of the curse, because I believed this was the good and safe way. But one evening Lucretia Mott came to the meeting and spoke as one who was moved by the holy ghost. She held no argument: she just poured out her soul on us. Some one says that in the abolition meetings of those times eloquence was dirt cheap: her speech that evening was of gold, well re-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

fined. She could quote from the Bible, chapter and verse; and the ancient inspiration blended with the new-born from her lips and heart. The whole question grew luminous to me through the light and the fire from heaven; and at the next meeting I made a clean breast of it in a very few words, and then sat down,—told them that I also was a Garrisonian Abolitionist from that day out. And now I think of this experience as one of the most pregnant moments in my life, when the divine hand “led me by a way I knew not and brought me into a large place,”—the church and fellowship that for almost forty-five years has been my glory and my joy. I cannot for my soul’s health say amen to what has been said to me and about me when I attained just now to the eighty years. The dear friend whose words on that evening wrought the change in my mind and purpose told me once that, when she spoke in a woods meeting many years before down in Maine, an Indian chief stalked up to her after the meeting closed, held out his hand, and said, “You have done well, if you do not think so.” And this she said was a memorable word, the good caution of the old chief; and it was a good word to me.



## SOME MEMORIES

---

All the same, I am wandering from my text, and must go on to say that my lot lay with the Abolitionists to the wonder of the kindly fellowship of the saints in the churches. They were alarmed; those men and women were infidels of the worst brand; I was touching pitch and must needs be defiled. The time came soon when I spoke at their meetings in the city, and went forth also from home hither and yonder to speak on the holy Sabbath day. It was a real grief to them. Some spoke to me sweetly about this, and some gave me the cold shoulder, for which I could not blame them. In a memory of my dear friend and father in our faith, Dr. Furness, printed in the *Christian Register*, I told of the debt I owe to him, how he asked me to preach for him in his absence, and I gladly did this. It was the last proof of my decline and fall from grace. I never cared for what we call dogma, but the rumor spread that I did not believe any more in the doctrines so precious and essential, and this also was true, but not by flat denial in the pulpit. This I did not feel free to do, but preached much more, I think, about the life that now is, because this was what always lay near my heart. I did not do many things they thought I ought to do, and

## SOME MEMORIES

---

the fetters hurt me, so that I made up my mind to resign as a local preacher at the coming quarterly conference in January, 1859.

The president of that conference is the presiding elder. He had made up his mind to clear the murky atmosphere, and asked me, with no grain of unkindness, if I would answer some questions he must ask me by request of the brethren, who feared I was not sound in the faith. The first was, Did I think it was becoming my standing in the church to speak from infidel platforms and preach in an infidel pulpit? I said that is not an infidel pulpit. Then there were questions about doctrine and dogma, the Trinity, eternal punishment, and total depravity, with more of the same tenor. I said "No" to each question. Whereat one brother cried out, "This is what comes from going with them infidels." I said also I had come to the conference bound to tell them where I stood if the presiding elder had not asked the questions, and to resign from my office; and he said, not unkindly, "There was no help for it."

And, at a very full meeting in the church on the Sunday morning, the good man — for he was good — told the people what had come to pass. There was no taint on me, he told them,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and no shadow save this. I did not go to the meeting; but the dear helpmeet was there, and told me there were moans and weeping. I was not deprived from my membership in the church. I still hold this, and may touch other memories that make good my word as I draw near to the end of my story.

## X

You may imagine that I was glad to be a free man when the elder had turned the key on the pulpits I must enter no more, and in some measure this was true. I seemed to draw a long breath when all was over, but can truly say I was not glad; for not one man in the brotherhood held out his hand to me or said a word, intimate as we had been in the church and in our homes through those years. I went out alone and lonesome.

Alone from the conference; but the dear helpmeet was with me heart and hand when I told her of that which had come to pass, good Methodist as she was, and had been down to that day. She had taken me for better or worse, and this was the worse if she had only married the Methodist; but she had married the man, *her* man, and so after a few tears had fallen — how tenderly now I remember the tears — she began at once to turn the worse into the better, while this was not because she had faith in my misbeliefs or heresies, but because she had faith

## SOME MEMORIES

---

in me. She was well aware how I had striven not to believe in the branded heresies — one or more among the brethren had used another term which held a tang of brimstone — had not striven to believe them any more than I had striven to grow to my girth and stature; for indeed the striving for a good while lay in the other scale. She knew also how I would have loved to stay in the old warm nest, because this would be also the safest; but it was not possible. The old shoemaker's warning had come true, about "wanting to reason ower mitch." John Locke says, "He that takes away Reason to make room for Revelation puts out the light of both." I found I must mind the light and follow it, or I could have no peace; and being still a preacher I must make the good confession or I could have no honor or even self-respect, and this the good helpmeet said I must do, bidding me be of good cheer.

One memory is still clear, of the time when I quite made up my mind to leave the old fellowship and find a home, if I could, in some other church, if there was one where I could be free to speak the truth as it should be given me to speak, without fear. The minister in charge had "got up a revival" in our own home church

## SOME MEMORIES

---

which was carried on for some time week nights and Sundays. I was not in close sympathy with the movement, but went to the meetings all the same to do all I felt free to do. Preachers were invited from the city to lend a hand, and among the rest a young man came who had won a name among us as a revivalist, and, as I found, was much given to preaching sermons fraught with lurid fire; and in the last sermon I heard from him he closed with this figure: "If you could hold your hand," he said, "in the flame of this lamp but a few moments, can you imagine the agony of such a burning? But this is no more than a faint and poor intimation of the eternal burning in the fires of hell which awaits you if you do not repent — the burning not for a few moments, but forevermore — and some sinner now in this church may be there before to-morrow morning." The sermon turned me sick of heart. I wanted to rise and say, That is not true, not one word of it. I brand it in His name whose mercy endureth forever, and in the name of his Christ who came to seek and to save that which was lost. No sermon so lurid had ever been preached before in my hearing; and, when the young man closed with the words I hold in my memory,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

the old minister uttered a loud amen, and the brethren seemed to be pleased with the discourse. I left the church almost instantly. It was the sharp turning-point in my way as it seems to me now. I had always believed that more would find their way into heaven than my church was ready to admit even by her evangel of free grace, so I was not considered quite sound when we would talk of these things out of meeting; but from that evening my heart turned toward the larger faith and hope I have held through so many years without dubitation or debate: I could not do otherwise. And yet I have touched this memory for another reason far more welcome. Fine old Thomas Fuller tells of a young man in his time who would make your hair stand up and your heart sink down when he preached one of these sermons full of the wrath of God; but, as he grew older, it was noticed he grew more gentle, and said his damn with a difference. So I hope it may well be true now of the young man whose sermon I hold in my memory, and I believe beyond all question this is true of the discourses in my mother church. I love to go now and then to hear her ministers of mark in her pulpits: I never hear such things said by any chance. The sermons

## SOME MEMORIES

---

as a rule are blended of sweetness and light: the doctrine of free grace has taken on larger and more gracious meanings in sermons and prayers. Indeed I think such fireful things are only to be heard now in the dark places of our land. One of these I did hear on a Sunday not many years ago when I was coming home on the steamer from my motherland. I use the word in no harsh or evil sense when I say the preacher gave us hell; for indeed, as it seemed, he gave us nothing else that evening. And, as we walked out of the saloon, a lady said to me, "That was a remarkable sermon, sir." "Yes," I answered, "I have not heard one I can compare to it in many years." The minister — not a Methodist — was from South Carolina and so was the lady, as I learned.



## XI

Now I must dwell on some memories which are only and always full to me of a sweet satisfaction, and will be to the end. I had made up my mind that I should never stand in one of those pulpits again. The old mother had done with me for good — or bad — and all, and it may well be the brethren thought so too that day. I am now close to the memories of our life in Chicago, where for more than twenty years I was the minister of the Second Unitarian Church. The church was burned in the great fire in 1871, and the home we owned, as well as almost all the homes in our parish. These must all be restored as they were, our home among them; and then in the winter of 1872-73 I went into the lecture field, which was very fertile in those days, and lectured for six months from Belfast in Maine to far away in Minnesota, earning the money thereby to lift the mortgage on the home.

While lecturing in Philadelphia, I went out to stay over Sunday with our old friends, James

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and Lucretia Mott, who lived near the old home church, where I had been suspended from my ministry. I told them on the Sunday morning I would go to the church, and my hostess said, "I will go with thee." I went to our own pew, while Mrs. Mott sat near the door on the women's side; and, as the minister then in charge passed up the aisle, she "gave me away," — told him who I was sitting in that pew, — and he came round, held out his hand, and invited me most earnestly to take the sermon, and, if I pleased, the whole service, because he knew the people would be most glad to hear me. He knew about the old trouble, of course, but did not care. I did not want to preach that morning, and said so. Then he said, "Will you come up and speak to them when I am through?" This I would do gladly; and, when the sermon closed, he said, "An old friend and long-time member of your church is with us this morning, who has promised to speak to you, and I am sure you will be glad to hear him." They wist not who I was, and looked at me, as I still remember, with a touch of wonder in their eyes; but, when I began to speak, there was a rustle as when the summer's breath passes over the ripening wheat. How

## SOME MEMORIES

---

happy I was to speak to them once more from the old pulpit! There was no word or whisper of the break between us some fourteen years before. I spoke to them of our life together in the old time, and then on my memories, all sweet and good now, of

“The kind, the true, the brave, the sweet,  
Who walk with us no more,”

and their hearts answered to mine as face answers to face in a mirror. Then there was the last hymn, and the prayer and benediction, and, when I came down, there was the good warm greeting first of all from an old Englishman and dear friend who rushed up to me with the tears in his eyes and said, “When ye got up to speak, I did not know who it wer; but, when I heerd your voice, I knew you right away, and said, ‘That’s brother Collyer.’”

Nor was this a mere flash in the pan. After we came to New York they wrote me to say they wanted to raise some money, and would I come over and give them a lecture in the church; and I was glad to say “Aye,” gave the lecture on the old terms of the local preacher, and got them quite a little pot of money. Some years after this my good Albert Engle

## SOME MEMORIES

---

died, and Mrs. Engle, with the family, would fain have me come over to take the service at his funeral. Albert, you will remember, was the man who said, "Come to my store for all you need," in the panic of 1857. The store had long ago been closed of debt, but not my debt of gratitude. I went over, took the services, and told the people, who had come from far and wide — for he was held in great esteem — what he had done so long ago for me and mine. I stayed over the Sunday, and went in the morning to our old home church, to find it was their communion service, at which the minister asked me to give the address. I was glad to do this; but, as I looked over the congregation, I saw only one of my contemporaries together with the old friend who had been my near neighbor when I must leave the church. The rest had "fallen on sleep." Yet I saw many faces I had loved to see there so long ago, not with my eyes, but my heart sight, as we all do. I was in full fellowship again in the old home church. Those I had left as children were mature men and women now in homes of their own, and I was still Brother Collyer.

There, in the church-yard, were the stones of memorial over the graves, and very near

## SOME MEMORIES

---

where I stood the dust of the little maid, who was taken to dwell with the angels fifty years ago now — our first great sorrow — our angel Agnes from that time; and the twins which were born after lay there also: they were only a day old when they were taken. So, when we set up our stone of memorial over the little graves, we had given them no names, and had engraven on the stone these “whose names are written in heaven.” One memory more must close this, shall I call it, chapter.

I was on the Sound steamer last summer, going east, and, sitting by a gentleman who lives in the South, we talked about many things, and among them some word was said about Ogontz, once Shoemakertown, where we had lived so long. He did not even suspect who I was, and began to tell me things about myself, asking me if I knew this ego. I said I had known him a long while, had indeed lived there once for some time. And he told me he was quite apt to go there when he came North, that some little children of mine — Mr. Collyer's — were buried in the church-yard at Milestown, and he always went to look at their graves. So I must needs tell him who I was, and say some fitting word out of my heart to the good

## SOME MEMORIES

---

man,—a sort of free minister, as I found, among the Quakers, very much given to think his own thoughts and take his own way.

But now another very dear memory clasps hands with these over which I have lingered. A longing took me to have the same welcome in the motherland and the churches there, where I began to preach in the later forties. I was getting on in years, had crossed the sea six times to see the kinsfolk and old friends, to wander over the moors and along the green lanes so familiar still, to hear the skylark singing in the lift of the blue, drop in to see the old friends who were left, and eat a bit of haver cake if there was any hanging on the bread flake,—to be a boy again, and then the young man to whom, as my faith stands also, the Lord said, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land which I will shew thee.” And on every visit I had met old friends, members of the churches, who were right glad to see me I was sure; but on each visit, the number was still less, they had gone to their rest,—“out of the body to God.”

And always I had preached in our own church in Leeds, one of the best in our denomination, and most prosperous, as well as in other churches

## SOME MEMORIES

---

of our order far and wide, so that I was quite well known, and might perhaps be entitled to the term an old man used in Western New York, who came forward after a lecture and said, "I should like to shake hands with you, sir: you are quite *notorious* in these parts." We shook hands forthwith.

This was the situation when five years ago last summer I wanted to cross the sea once more, it may well be for the last time,—crossed with the longing which had not abated, but with no hope that it would be made good. I had never whispered my desire to any man or woman in the old communion, or, so far as I remember, to any other man or woman, while, if I had told my secret to any friend, and he had asked me to name the churches in the old communion in which I would love of all things, or churches, in the world to be heard, I should have answered, 'These three,—the old meeting-house in Addingham where I made my first effort and came to grief; the church in Ilkley, where I bid fair to make a good rail to stop the gaps; and the small meeting-house on the hill in the hamlet where I was raised. Our family had left many years before, but was still remembered in here and there a home. These would have been my first,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and, indeed my only, choice, while this is now my joy and my wonder,—that I was invited to preach in these three and no fourth, as if they alone had known my secret. About a week after I arrived in Leeds a gentleman came with the invitation from the first I have named, and would not hear me when, like a maiden who receives a proposal from the man she loves and means of course to accept, I was a little shy, saying I was a Unitarian, and, if I preached for them, it would make trouble, and so on. He just whistled my words down the wind. This was all settled, he said. The senior minister had said I should be right welcome, so had the people; and so I said, “All right,” and took the service. It was a great congregation, filling the old chapel to the doors, if I might judge from what an old friend, a stone delver, whose tools I made and sharpened fifty years before, said, who told me he came to “t’ chapel, but couldn’t git in.” Then the senior minister, Rev. Joseph Dawson, wrote me from Ilkley, where they had built a noble church and where I preached on the Sunday before we started to find our new home, bidding the old friends good-bye. He invited me most cordially to come and preach for them, and to be his guest in the



## SOME MEMORIES

---

manse. I stayed with him and his good sunny-hearted helpmeet three days, and we communed together like brothers beloved; and, as when the priest from Canada stayed with Eliot, the apostle to the Indians, he says it was delightful to find how much of the divine truth they held in common, so I felt when I stayed those three days, all too brief, at the manse.

I have always kept in rather close touch with my old town, so that after the forty-eight years I was no stranger. Many old friends had gone and few were left, but the new and the old gave me as great welcome as my heart could desire.

There, on the hill in the small chapel, where no man remembered me, and only one woman, who went to her rest when this new year came in, there was the same heart-whole welcome. This is the story of what came to pass in the old mother church I had left in sorrow that it must be so, and was welcomed just as I was and had been through the many years to the good old mother's home and heart. And, as I turned my face hitherward, I said, "I have had my heart's desire."

## XII

I wonder whether it was wise to wander away from these memories in my last script, as they follow each other in strict sequence, to tell you how the desire of my heart was given me in that warm welcome at the old home church at Milestown once and again, and then in the three churches of the old faith and fellowship with which my life was blended in the motherland.

The truth is the impulse to do this there and then was not to be resisted or to save them for a final chapter. It overcame me, as when we want to go at once and tell dear friends about some stroke of good fortune that has come to us we did not hope for that will make more sweet and fruitful the whole tenor of our life.

The warm welcome was given to me just as I was and must be in faith and fellowship to the end of my life,—the boon I longed for, but must not ask for; while it may be this was one fair reason that in all the years of my ministry since I became what I am I had said no

## SOME MEMORIES

---

word I can now remember against the mother church or the faith she holds and maintains. The story is told of an old lady at Brighton in England who was so wrought up by a sermon she heard against the Quakers in the early times that she broke the windows of their meeting-house with her Bible as she went home. I could never use my Bible for such a purpose, even to crack a pane. John Wesley was, and is still, my Saint John of the later time. Indeed there is a sermon somewhere in the barrel, in which I have tried to tell the great and beautiful story of his life, so far as it can be told in, say, forty minutes, with no ifs or buts from the first sentence to the last, and in praise of the church he founded, which has been and is now one of the grandest forces in the religious life of our common Christendom, as I most surely believe. To say this was the main reason why I left the home in the lane where we sat, my wife and I, that evening, when the key had been turned on the pulpits, and when there was no word or look of blame from the brave and true helpmeet, but only of good cheer. Ten years before, when I had made up my mind to emigrate, and some months after we had found each other, the memory has al-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

ways dwelt in my heart of an evening when I said to her, after much debate in my own mind: "We cannot foresee what will be our fortune when we have crossed the sea. It may be hard for us to get a good start, and I can stand it; but you have been used to a softer and more gentle life. And so, if you think it will be best, we will bid each other good-bye at the church-door or in your home when we are married. Then, when I am in good work and can make a home, I will come over for you or you can come over to me, as we think best." I can never forget that evening as we stood under the stars — my right hand could sooner forget its cunning — how there was silence for a few moments, and then, with no preface, she answered me in these words from the lovely idyl in the holy book: "Whither thou goest, I will go; whither thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; whither thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." The time came soon after this evening for the wedding, when we made the vows in the presence of the minister and friends; but I have often thought the words said, as we stood under the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

stars, were still more sacred to me than those we said in the church.

The words were not said again that evening when I came home from the conference or ever again, because there was no need: it would be a vain repetition. Some old friends who were not in the church came also to cheer me and ask me to hold a service in a small hall they could hire, for they were not content that I should preach no more; but I was not prepared to begin again on my own account or theirs. Still, I agreed to hold one service, the first or the farewell, and speak to those who would come to hear me of some things that lay near my heart; and the service was held on the next Sunday, the first and the last in the valley for many a year.

In Scotland they say, "When one door steeks, anither opens," and within a month one opened I could not have dreamed of which has never been closed in these forty-five years to the very week when I pen these words. Now and then on a Sunday I would walk into the city to hear my dear Father Furness, who was teaching me many things; and one of these days, when I went down, there was a stranger in the pulpit. So I must of course stay and hear him. It

## SOME MEMORIES

---

was Dr. Livermore, the editor in those days of our New York organ, the *Christian Inquirer*, and he had come, I think, on the double errand to give Brother Furness a labor of love and then to hunt up — or hunt down — subscribers for the paper, which amounts to about the same thing. Dr. Furness introduced me to the preacher after the service, and asked me to go home to dinner with him, whereat I did not begin to make excuses with the men in the Gospels who were invited to the great supper, but went gladly.

This was some time before I came to grief in the conference. We talked of many things in the afternoon, then I went home; and in the week after I had spoken in the hall a note came from Dr. Furness, asking me to come on the next Sunday. So I went, with no dream of what he wanted to see me for any more than the babe unborn. It was to consult me about a letter he had received from Chicago and from our Unitarian church. "The church," he said, "employs a minister-at-large to help the poor in their city. The man they have employed has broken down and can do no more, and now they want a man to take his place. They wrote," he continued, "to Dr. Livermore, ask-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

ing him if he could help them to find a man in the East who could fill the gap. And in his answer he told them to write me about a young blacksmith he met here one Sunday, a Methodist local preacher of a liberal mind and make, who might be the man they wanted. So they wrote to me, and I answered their letter; and here is the letter they have sent you in answer to mine. Will you take it home, think it well over, and then come again next Sunday and tell me what you will do?"

The letter held a hearty invitation to come out to Chicago and take charge of their ministry-at-large to the poor, with due instructions about what my work would be. I read the letter carefully, and then said: "I do not need a week, sir, to make up my mind and consult with the mother. We will go."

It was one of those pregnant moments I have told you of before, when the tide must be taken at the turn without hesitation or debate. The light shone again on the way I must go, and this was all I needed so far, while I was sure the mother would stand true to the vow she made as we stood that evening under the stars; and so it was. She did not cast a pebble in the way, but said "Amen" right heartily. And

## SOME MEMORIES

---

I began to inquire about this far-away city. I am not sure now that I had heard one word about it, and am quite sure that Pekin is not so strange a city to me now as our home for more than twenty years was then. One man in the forge had been there, I found. I asked him to tell me all he knew about Chicago, and the substance of his knowledge was this: the place was all mud when he was there, and the water you had to drink was brought from the lake in barrels and peddled from house to house. He was only there a few weeks, so many years ago, and then he cleared out and came East, as he thought I should. My employer had lived in Illinois when he was a younger man. He had been to Chicago, and advised me not to go, and said also for my comfort that, if we went, we should return, and he would keep my fire for me and anvil; for this I thanked him kindly, but said, "We are going to stay." We talked these things over in the home, and began to arrange for the moving. The managers of the ministry-at-large wanted me to come out at once. This I could do; mother said she must have time to sell the household goods at auction, have everything ship-shape for herself and the children, and then come out to me. So in



## SOME MEMORIES

---

February I went West, and in April she came with the children, safe and sound, and would tell me to the last how good James Mott and Lucretia had been in helping her to get a good ready, and how he had come with them to the train and said, "Now is there anything more thee thinks I can do?" It was a journey of about forty-four hours — or it may be more — in those days from Philadelphia to Chicago, with no Pullman cars or their like. Mr. Pullman indeed was at work then, or soon after, in the city, raising great buildings to a higher plane: the whole Marine Block, I remember, was one of them, and another was the Tremont Hotel. The grand stroke of his life was waiting in his good brain to be done, and make millions of folk his debtors. But there we were, all safe and sound; and, when the mother and children came, I was busy at the work they had engaged me to do for the poor. And here is a rough outline of my work.

I must look after the poor,— as one man said, the Lord's poor, our own poor, and the devil's poor; for I should find them all in Chicago. Try by all means to set them on their feet and help them to go straight, if possible. Find homes for girls and boys on farms or in good

## SOME MEMORIES

---

homes in the country, where their work would be worth their home and education. Hold a night school and a Sunday-school, mainly, as I found, for the children of the emigrants who were flocking there from Germany in those times, and the managers would give me all the teachers I might need.

### XIII

It was welcome work for me, and mother was my good helpmeet and inspiration. She did not lend a hand, she gave it for keeps; and she was my wise monitor in the time of need. One memory, the most sacred of all now, she would forbid me to touch if she was here with us still. A man came one day to see if I could do anything to help a poor girl who had been left in a wretched den to die. I went at once to see her, and found she was, as we say, a "lost woman." I could find no refuge for her anywhere in the city. So, when I came home, I told mother my trouble. She was silent some time after I had said, "Can you do anything?" And then she answered: "There is only one thing we can do: we have a spare room, we must take her in. It is hard. Here are the children; but we can keep the poor creature apart in that room, and I will look after her." So this was done. In about a month she was well. We wanted to find her a place to work. Mother often told me in the after time how she

## SOME MEMORIES

---

had spoken to her about the life she had lived and the life she might live, but could make no impression on her heart or mind. She left us, with no thanks even when she was well, and went to her own place. She had no tears to shed at the feet of the holy one of God, or box of ointment to break. She was still a "lost woman." The schools prospered. The boys were eager to learn "de English," as they would tell me: then they would be American. This was their great purpose, and for years after I gave up this ministry, when they were grown men, one and another would stop me on the street and tell me they were my old scholars in the night school or the Sunday-school when they were boys.

And now another memory comes to me which may cast a gleam of light on our success in the Sunday-school, and on the way they learned their lessons. One of the classes had been working their way through the life of Moses, from his infancy to his call to be the deliverer of the tribes from their bondage. I had noticed how one bright boy would wrestle, head well down, with the story. So I picked him out one Sunday to see how much he had learned, and here are the questions and answers:—

## SOME MEMORIES

---

“What have you learned about Moses, my boy?” “The king’s daughter, *she* found him when he was a baby, in a box in the rushes down by the river, and took him home to nuss him.” “Did she nurse him herself?” “No, she hired a woman to nuss him, and it was his own mother; but she didn’t know that.” “And what did Moses do then?” “He grew to be a man.” “And what did he do when he was a man?” “He killed another man.” “Then what did he do?” “Buried him in the sand.” “What did he do after he had buried him in the sand?” “He run away and went to keeping sheep on the prairie.” “Did he stay there all his life?” “No, he quit that because he saw a bush afire.” “Did that scare him, so that he ran away and left his sheep?” “No, something talked to him in the bush, and told him to go back home; and it was the Lord what talked to him.” “And what did the Lord say?” “He told him to take his boots off.” And here ended our lesson on the early life of Moses, at which I smiled and said, “You have done well, my boy,—very well indeed.”

So the schools prospered, and in some fair degree the ministry to the poor. I liked my work, and, so far as I can judge now, would

## SOME MEMORIES

---

have been glad to go right on with it to the end of my life; but this was not to be. There is an inscription over the main doorway of the old castle at Harewood, some miles from Ilkley, which runs, "Vat sal be sal." I think of it sometimes as I muse over the years,—“What shall be shall,”—and also those lines of Cardinal Newman —“A strong and gentle pressure tells me I am not self-moving, but borne upward on my way.”

Rev. George A. Noyes was the minister of the church in Chicago. I went at once to report my arrival, and he greeted me warmly, and with his wife, then and still my dear friend, made me welcome to their home whenever I was pleased to come. He also asked me to preach for his people on the second Sunday after I arrived. This was a risk, but he took it, the dear good fellow! But there I was less than a month from my anvil and fire, with horny hands and not very fair to see after all the scrubbing.

My heart was in my mouth, as we say, and the word was not written. It was something from the text, “They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest,”—a word I had said in the home church when I was in good

## SOME MEMORIES

---

standing. There was no such help from on high as that which came to me on the moorside and in the small schoolhouse. Still there were those in the church who would tell me after many years how they still remembered the sermon. Please do not think I am blowing that trumpet again: one and another did tell me they were glad to hear me that day, and this was welcome; for you see it was in some sort my "trial sermon," and I should be glad to try again, as I presently found I must.

Brother Noyes — for this he was — had made up his mind to resign and go East. He had "approved himself a minister that needeth not to be ashamed," and I was present in a company of the members when they besought him to stay; but he said he must resign, and this he did very soon.

Then the foretelling of the old miller came true about the spare rail. It was a far cry in those days to Boston, where the church must go for men to supply the pulpit from which again they might choose another minister. Brother Noyes had said in his parting words that, while the pulpit was vacant, he was glad to say here was a man — meaning me — who would take the services; and I will not tell

## SOME MEMORIES

---

you what he said besides. They sent out good men from New England, each, if I remember, for a month; and I heard them all, to my delight, Dr. Briggs, Dr. Thompson, Dr. Sears, Charles Brigham, Mr. Woodbury, Dr. Stebbins of Portland, and more I do not remember, who have all done their good days' work and gone to their rest. But between those who came out to fill the pulpit there would still be gaps when the supplies did not meet and tie, and then they would fall back on the spare rail they had always with them, so that the church was never closed for a single Sunday. I think the church paid me something for over time, but do not remember what it was,—all I was worth no doubt. But my great reward lay in the sermons I heard from the men who came out, and brought of their best, as was meet and right. These were of a worth to me I cannot estimate. They were my theological school: each one had his message and his lessons for me, and how greedily I drank them in, to be sure! I knew what I did *not* believe and would not preach; they gave me great and noble affirmations and some insight of the way to state them, so that to this day I am grateful for what I learned from their lips and their hearts.



#### XIV

I was more than content in my ministry-at-large. The church gave me a free hand, and my heart was in the work. Nor did I care much for the distinction drawn for my guidance between God's poor and the others, because I could not make it work. I began very soon also to dream of a religious service we might hold in the upper room where we held the week-night and Sunday sessions of the schools,— a service which might bloom out into a church for my poor; but this was not to be.

Chicago is a three-quarter city, or, if this term touches her dignity, we will say a three-sided city,— the South Side, the West, and the North. The first church of our name was built on the South Side, which was then, and is still, the centre of the great city, and had grown strong in the ministry of Brother Rush R. Shippen, who is still to the fore with the eager heart and fervent fire of his earlier years,— no white ashes where the fire was, as it seems to his lovers and friends. The city had given

## SOME MEMORIES

---

to each denomination the land on which to build their first church on the South Side, with the proviso that, when a society was organized on the West and North Sides within a certain time set forth in the grant, they should each have one-quarter in land on which to build. The society on the North Side was organized in 1857, to secure the lot on which they would build as soon as they could see their way; but they had held no services, though they had sent a call, or, it may be, a feeler, to Thomas Starr King in Boston, but found he could not come on any terms. You heard how they asked me to take the services in the mother church after Mr. Noyes left them, when the supplies from New England did not meet and tie. The members came there from all sides, no matter who was to preach — the good members — and heard the minister-at-large with the rest, and, as they would tell me afterward, began to ask each other, as they went home, whether it would not be well and the best they could do to hire some place on the North Side in which to hold services on Sundays in the afternoon, and have me take charge of them.

So a meeting was called, in which they resolved to begin and also to invite me to take

## SOME MEMORIES

---

the charge, looked round for a meeting-house, and found one they hired from the Baptists, where the first services were held on the last Sunday in May, 1859; and here once more my helpmeet comes in. It was my own understanding that I should take these services as a supply to see what could be done, and then, if there was a fair prospect of success, they would build, and call a man, well endowed, to take charge of the parish, and I should give my whole time and strength to the ministry-at-large.

We had talked all this over in the home, and mother was willing that I should take hold; but, when the time drew near, I said to her: "We cannot tell what will be the result of this movement. This is a Unitarian society. I am sure I am no longer a Methodist, but beyond this I am in a mist. I must preach the truth as it comes to me, and you may not like the sermons. So please do not go with me one step farther if you do not feel free to do so, but stay in the old church." This was about all I said, and she answered me not one word there, and then there was no need: she had said her last word ten years before as we stood under the stars. But now, on the Sunday afternoon when I came out of our room ready to go

## SOME MEMORIES

---

my lone self, if I must, there she stood in the living-room, and turned to me with a sweet smile and shining eyes, all ready to fulfill her vow—"Whither thou goest I will go"—hat on, gloves on, ready before I was; and so we went together hand in hand through the thirty years which remained.

This was in the spring of the year. The Western Conference was held that year in Milwaukee. I went to the conference, and I found the brethren wanted to ordain me and make me a full-fledged minister of our faith. They did not ask me where I stood, but went in the face of the apostle's warning, "Lay hands suddenly on no man"; and I did not say them nay or tell them I was ordained already by the good old farmer on the moorside. My friend and brother of the many years, Rev. A. D. Mayo, preached the ordination sermon; but who took the other parts I do not now remember. Then the president of the conference, Dr. Hosmer of Buffalo, laid his hands on me, and blessed me in a very sweet and tender prayer. They had asked no questions about my beliefs. I was glad for this, because I should have been puzzled to answer them; nor did any man try to tell me what I should preach or not preach,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and I was glad for that, because I wanted to walk free. And I may close this memory with one of the last summer when I fell in with a gentleman who told me he was present at my ordination, and, talking with Dr. Hosmer about the wide door they had opened for me, the dear old saint said, Well, I had talked with him before the conference, and found I did not want to teach him anything except how to read a hymn.

I came home to take hold of the new work and do the best I could for the infant church and my ministry-at-large (for both were on my hands), and so far as I remember was never tired.

There was no time to write sermons. Indeed, I had never written one since I began my ministry as a local preacher. The sermons were in my head or my heart, or both; but I had made notes after I came to Chicago on half a sheet of note-paper, to help me keep in line. Good old Master Fuller says, "Some young ministers in our time take a text for a kind of horse-block wherefrom, when they have mounted, they canter away, and you see them no more until they dismount at the end of the sermon"; but I soon found this would not do. I had been

## SOME MEMORIES

---

sitting at the feet of those ministers from New England, and learned, as I listened, that I must not canter away from my text. So I began to make my skeletons, and trust in the Spirit to breathe on them and make the dry bones live. One of these Sundays I well remember, an August afternoon, so hot that I wore a linen duster. My text was "Enoch walked with God," and the dry bones lived that day. I wrote the words down in spare moments. It was the first sermon in manuscript I ever owned. Some who read these memories may have seen it in one of my books, and I shall preach it again on Sunday.

A grandson of Dr. Bancroft told me that, when his grandsire was far on in years, he would preach an old sermon to his people in Worcester when the humor took him toward the close of his ministry of forty-one years, but made no note of day or year. He took one for this purpose on a Sunday morning he had repeated often in the many years, but had forgotten all about it, and said to one of his deacons as he came out of church, "How did you like the sermon, sir?" "Very much, doctor," the good man answered. "I always did like *that*

## SOME MEMORIES

---

sermon.” So I suspect the elders will say on Sunday, or hope they will.

But I am rambling again, and must return to the little church on the corner. By mid-summer in this first year the society had made up its mind to build. The congregation was growing, and new families were added to the church, so we were much encouraged. The lot was bought, the plans made, the builder found, and the church opened for dedication on Christmas Day, when Dr. Hosmer came from Buffalo to preach the sermon and lay his benediction on the infant church, as he had laid it on me at the conference in the spring. Then I thought my work for the church was done, and I must give all my time to the ministry-at-large. So I asked the trustees to meet me on a week-day evening, and, when we came together, told them they must now find a man to take charge of the church and parish, and I would give my whole time to the ministry-at-large, but would lend a hand still when I was needed in both churches.

I still remember their surprise. They had not thought of such a thing, they said. The society wanted me and not another man. I told them frankly — what indeed they knew in some

## SOME MEMORIES

---

sort — that I had come to them right out of the forge less than a year before, had no education or training for the work they would have me do, with more of the same tenor, but could not move them. Then they said, “Will you agree to this proposal,—that we shall write to any ministers in our body you may name, and seek their counsel as to what you ought to do?” I agreed to this, and said I would stand to their answer. Four men were named — Dr. Eliot of St. Louis, Dr. Hosmer of Buffalo, Dr. Bellows of New York, and Dr. James Freeman Clarke of Boston — who answered with one consent that I must take the church.



## XV

So I was "called," with due form and ceremony, to be the minister of Unity Church, but with more fear than faith that I should be able to meet the demand, and said one day, when fear had me fast: "Mother, I think it was a mistake all round. In a year from now I shall not have another word to say. It will be dropping buckets into empty wells." She must have been busy and did not want to be bothered with my moods; for I see her turn to me with something in her hand she is still doing, and she says: "Don't bother me with such nonsense! Yours is not a cistern: it is a living spring. Keep it running clear and deepen your well when you must, and you will have more to say in a year from now than you have ever had before in your life." So the natives in the South Sea Islands say of a missionary who has such a helpmeet, "He is a two right-hand man."

We found an assistant for the ministry-at-large, a good trained woman, who could not only help me, but teach me some good lessons. So

## SOME MEMORIES

---

the work went on nicely through the winter, to my pure content; and then along in the heart of June my ministry took on a wider meaning.

A tornado or cyclone, or both, had swept through Iowa, with a besom of destruction to life and life's values. The good heart of our city responded at once to the cry for succor. You may still trust Chicago to do that. The Board of Trade formed a committee of its members to take action, money was subscribed swiftly — a large sum for those days — and, being what I was, they asked me to take charge of the money and go over into Iowa to help them.

I went at once — the church, then and always, was glad to let me go on these errands — and touched the track of the destroyer first at the pretty town of Camanche, where my heart ached at what I saw and heard of the ravage, and from thence took a wagon and went westward on the zigzag out to Cedar Rapids, asking, as we went along, for those in sore distress, and helping them from my store. This is no place to tell the story of the great disaster. I told it at some length in a sermon when I got home, but that was burnt in the great fire, with many more. But two memories

## SOME MEMORIES

---

still stand clear,— one of a woman that holds a gleam of humor, and the other of a man who made good the scripture, “A wise man seeth the danger, and hideth himself.” The rest I need not cite. The woman, they told me, had been sadly hurt, and was staying at such a farm in Eden township. I went, and found her lying helpless in her room, and held out my hand, as I told her my errand. She did not lift her hand, but said, “I am so sorry, sir, but both my arms are broken.” Then, as we chatted (for she was a cheerful soul) she told me of her life. “I am alone,” she said, “and go out nursing for my living, and was getting on real nice, so that I had saved money to buy a new dress. It was a *barège*, *real barège*; and it was not made up. But the house where I was staying was blown all away, and my dress — I do not know where it went, nobody can tell me; and it was *real barège*, the first I ever had” — And then she quite broke down. I comforted her the best I knew, and one pleasant gleam rests on the small room to this day. I made sure she should have a new dress,— *real* beyond all question.

My wise man was a farmer, who had prospered by deserving, I was sure, so that he had been able to build a new house of brick; but the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

tornado had literally crushed the brick into small fragments and wrecked everything about the place, which was strewn with the fragments and splinters, and the tires of the wagon wheels were twisted as if some strong machine had twisted them round and about. My man was there alone, the mother and family were sheltered in another home beyond the line of the storm, which, by the way, was hardly more than half a mile wide anywhere.

“You were not hurt then,” I said, “or the wife and children?” “No,” he answered very quietly, as one still in the shadow of a great awe, “and I will tell you why. When we came here, the Indians used to tell about these tornadoes; and we have had bad storms, but nothing like this before. And I would think the thing over and wonder what we should do if one came along. Well, it came to me sudden, one day, what to do. You see that sort o’ cave in the rise near by? That was the idee that came to me. We would dig in there and make a root house with a good strong door. Then, if the [something I will not spell] did not jump on us too sudden, we would rush in there and shet the door. Well, things began to look skeery, sir, in the week before that Sunday afternoon, up above, and it

## SOME MEMORIES

---

was stifling on the prairie, so I began to look out for squalls. I had told 'my woman' how I felt, and warned her to be ready with the children if the thing should come along. Well, about three o'clock I was setting on that hump a-watching, and all to once I see her away out yonder, comin' whirlin' head on, black and angry, and I ran and shouted, 'Ma, here she comes!' She was ready with the children. There was no time to spare. We rushed for the root house and shet the door. She could not hurt the rise and slid past the door. First there was a roar, and then it was still, and then another roar; but we were safe in the root house, and, when we came out, things were what you see."

They tell of an Englishman, who came over sea to see how we fared, and, coming to Chicago, exclaimed, "Well, she beats her own brag!" And that is true, for the double reason, first, of her marvellous growth, and then because she brags no more. Forty-five years ago in this week when I came there, she was lifting herself out of the mud, where the need was, seven feet, the buildings, as I have said, with jack-screws worked by the might of Irish labor — houses, banks, stores, and hotels — while the inmates

## SOME MEMORIES

---

stayed about their business just the same, and the spaces in the streets were brought up to the new level. The population in 1860 was one hundred and nine thousand, and she was alive to the tips of her fingers and the core of her heart and brain. I had lived in the country all my life, and when I came there was thirty-six years of age. The life in a city was a new life, and I caught something of the strong inspiration. The rune runs, "God made the country, and man made the town." The rune is not true. Every great city hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. We come to the strong and vital cities to find ourselves: this was what befell me in going to Chicago. There was a challenge in the strong and headstrong life I must answer. Evil, yes, but good also to match, and more than match. And well the fine old Scotchman says: —

"Evil is here that we may make it good,  
Else had good men on earth scant work to do.  
What would you have? In Paradise, no doubt,  
Weeds grandly grew, and Adam plucked them out."

How good the years have been as I look backward now, and none more full of pure satisfaction than those twenty years in the mighty

## SOME MEMORIES

---

young city! I wist not what lay before us of sorrow and joy, loss and gain. I thank God for that, as I sit here in the silence, sure in my soul that through all the mishaps, the mistakes, and the failures more than I can number, "He has led me all my life long." Of these years I shall try to tell the story as the memories touch me,— of the new-born church in the great conflict for the solidarity of the republic and the extinction of slavery, her steadfast continuance in well-doing and then in the great conflagration, when the church and the homes were destroyed, to be rebuilt again and established. Of these things I should have told the story, already, but have been allured to linger, it may be to small purpose; but I did want to tell you how I came to be the minister of Unity Church through the wide door and the warm and strong welcome.

## XVI

I was lured away last week from the true sequence of these memories of the time when the telegram told us in Chicago of the shot fired on Fort Sumter — which was also heard round the world — and of the answer our lusty and loyal young city made to the challenge. The news came there on the Sunday morning. The answer was given in that week, when our city spake, and on the next Sunday by the loyal churches and their ministers; and you would not have doubted for a moment where our own church stood when you went indoors that morning. You could not see the pulpit: it was wrapped about in a great flag, and there was another behind the minister. The organ at the other end was also hung all about, while others hung from the iron rods set under the ceiling to hold the frame well together. I did not like those rods at all, and had branded them in my mind as an instance of some Dutch *deformed* style of architecture; but now they looked beautiful to me because of the banners.



## SOME MEMORIES

---

I had ransacked my memory and Bible for a text from which I would try to preach my sermon, and found it in these words of the Master,—“He that has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.” We sang for the first hymn “Before Jehovah’s awful throne,” for the second “America,” closed with the doxology, and then after the benediction we sang “The Star-spangled Banner.” I had felt a touch of dismay over the way our people did not sing, used as I had been to the singing in our Methodist chapels, where we made a joyful noise unto the Lord, in tune or out, it made small matter. Here my people with but a very few exceptions were content to let the choir do the singing. I had exhorted them to make the same joyful noise, and had made small headway. I had been given to understand it was not good taste. So James Freeman Clarke, in speaking of this in our conference, had said, “Such good taste will be the death of us.”

But that morning they sang as if they would lift the roof in despite of the iron rods, and my soul for once was satisfied. The ice was broken by that cannon-ball at Sumter, and the waters flowed free. It was the first time, but by no means the last. The battle-cry of freedom had

## SOME MEMORIES

---

set the people free, and that Sunday evening the young men enlisted for the rush down to Cairo.

In the summer the Sanitary Commission was organized,—the grandest organization, to my own mind, the world has ever known in its merciful ministration for the sick and wounded on the battlefield, in the hospitals, or wherever help was needed, with the whole loyal nation at work, until the war was over, piling up money and supplies. Dr. Bellows, the minister of our church — All Souls—in New York, was beyond all other men the inspiring soul of the commission, and its president to the end of its most noble life. And he told me once that, when they had taken the first steps, he went to see the commander-in-chief of the army, to tell him what they proposed to do through the commission. The great man heard him with a chill civility, with no word of approval, and said finally, “The truth is, sir, we hate your philanthropists”; and the doctor answered, “Well, we hate your generals,—you mean bogus philanthropists of course, and I mean bogus generals.” Then he went forth to do the work God had given him to do.

He sent me a message in that summer, asking

## SOME MEMORIES

---

me to come down to Washington and serve on the commission. I laid the matter before the church on the Sunday morning, and they said with one voice, "Go!" So I went, and found my work would be to visit the camps where "all was quiet on the Potomac"—this, you will know, was after Bull Run — look well into their sanitary condition, and report. They gave me a team with a soldier to take me from camp to camp, and I think I visited them all. It was not pleasant work, but the colonels were pleasant and helpful men. Many memories lie dormant of Washington in that summer, but they do not touch the marrow of the matter. So I will only tell you of my bad scare. I was to visit a camp somewhere towards the Maryland line. It was on a sunny Saturday morning; and I remember, as we went past the White House toward the bridge, my soldier said, "See them feet, sir?" There were perhaps half a dozen pairs set sole towards us at two open windows, and my man said: "That's the Cabinet a-settin'. See the big feet in the middle o' that window? Them's Old Abe's." How sacred the name has become since that morning! but then this was the term in common use among the people.

## SOME MEMORIES

---

We crossed the bridge and pointed, as my man thought, all right for the camp; but after some time he took a wrong turn in the woods, and told me he did not know how to steer. "Better go right on," I said. "We shall get out of the woods, and then we can take our bearings." He went on for a while, until we came to an opening in the woods and saw a ridge before us planted with cannon. "That's a rebel battery," he whispered. "What'll we do?" "Turn round," I whispered, "and make a bee-line, if you can, for the river." This the good fellow did, and was fortunate. We got safely to the city, and told the story of our hair-breadth escape — leastwise I did — with *empressement*. "Where was it?" my hearers said. And after some time it came out clear that this was the Munson's Hill Battery, and those were "the quaker"—that is, the wooden — guns, bless the mark!

I went home to Chicago early in October, opened the church for one Sunday, perhaps, but had been asked to go to St. Louis and thence through Missouri, and report from there. The Western Sanitary Commission was well under way by that time, and also did a noble work until the war was over. I went to Jefferson City,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

to see after the hospital there, where I found things in good condition, and then went on to the end of the route. Fremont's troops had gone over, picking up sick men to take back to St. Louis. This was a hard task: the troops seemed to have eaten the land clean to the bone. I was never so hungry, so far as I remember, before or since. All we had to eat going down was hard tack. The men who were helping me with the sick — good fellows, but so hungry — said, when the train halted for a few minutes, "Yonder is a tavern: we will go and forage for victuals."

They went, and presently came on the dead run, holding something by a string, with a man running after them, shouting bad words. He was the tavern-keeper, a German; and it was a piece of pork they had on the string. The train had begun to move slowly. They had just time to board the train, so had the tavern-keeper; and this is how I came to know he was saying bad words when I could not hear them. The soldiers told me they wanted to buy the pork, which was roasting before the fire, and he would not sell it at any price. So one of them cut the string, and they ran off with it. He calmed down after another polyglot of

## SOME MEMORIES

---

blasphemy, and sat up to help them eat his pork ; and, when they had dined on that and the hard tack, I said to one of them, " Now let's pay him for the pork." So we paid him, and he got off at the first station to take a train home. No, I did not eat any of that pork.

Toward sundown a bad headache came on ; and, when we came to a long wait at the California station, I must needs find some good soul who would make me a cup of tea. A man on the platform pointed to a house where he thought I could have one, and, asking there, the woman said, " I will give you your supper for a quarter." I told her this was what I wanted, so she got me my supper. It was not good, but the best she had.

I found, chatting with her, that she was a member of the small white church near by. So for the humor of it I said, " I suppose you entertain the ministers now and then when they come round? "

" Yes," she said, " I entertain 'em all and never take a cent. I would scorn to charge a minister." Whereat I said with a most winsome smile, " I am a minister, ma'am."

She looked me over sharply. The grime of

## SOME MEMORIES

---

a week was on me: I was unshaven also, and looked much more like a tramp. So she said promptly, "You are no minister."

I drew a lot of letters from my pocket, laid them in her hand, and said, "Read the address, please, on those letters."

She read them. "Yes, I suppose you be a minister; but be you for the North or the South?"

"For the North," I answered, "every time."

"Then," she answered, "you got to pay for your supper. I am for the South every time. I don't feed Yanks for noth'n'; and, if my husband out there wa'n't a coward, he would be fighting for the South this day." So I paid for my supper, and my head was better.

I reported in St. Louis to my dear old friend Dr. Eliot, who was giving his life for the great cause; and then went home to my church to leave them again for Fort Donelson. I shall tell the story soon of what we tried to do there. Early in April, when the news came from Pittsburg Landing of the stern battles, we met swiftly again, ready to lend a hand. A larger number volunteered to go, and we lost no time speeding down to Cairo and then up the



## SOME MEMORIES

---

river. They had elected me to be captain of the company, because, as they said, I knew the ropes.

Brother Moody, with some ministers in the "Christian Commission," was in the company; and, as we went up the river, he said to me: "Brother Collyer, we are going to hold a prayer-meeting in the saloon. Will you come in and join us?" "Gladly," I answered, and went. Early in the meeting he made an address to us, of which the burden was that we were going to the battlefield to save souls or those men would die in their sins. He did not say they would go to hell, but this was the clear inference if we did not save them.

When he sat down, I rose to my feet and said, "Brother Moody is mistaken: we are not going there to save the souls of our soldiers, but to save their lives and leave their souls in the hands of God." Our work would be this we had done at Fort Donelson; and I outlined the work,—to comfort them with tender words, lay on the soft linen, and cool water, wash them, and see by all means to their help and healing. The great first thing was the nursing back to life, and this we must do.

There was a dead silence when I sat down,



## SOME MEMORIES

---

and then a brother minister from Chicago rose and said: "This is the way the Unitarians always go to work, from the surface inward; but we go directly to the heart first, and then work out to the surface, ending where they begin. We must do the one thing and not leave the other undone,—warn the sinner, pray with him, and point him to *the thief on the cross*."

I rose on the instant when he sat down, and said: "My friends, we know what those men have done, no matter who or what they are. They left their homes for the camp and the battle, while we stayed behind in our city. They endured hardness like good soldiers, while we were lodged softly. They have fought and fallen for the flag of the Union and all the flag stands for, while here we are safe and sound. I will not doubt for a moment the sincerity of my friend and yours who has just spoken; but I will say for myself that I should be ashamed all my life long if I should point to the thief on the cross in speaking to these men, or to any other thief the world has ever heard of." And, when I sat down, there was a roar of applause.

And now another memory links in with this. About a year before Brother Moody was taken to his well-won rest and reward, I was standing

## SOME MEMORIES

---

one morning on a platform of the elevated, waiting for a train, when a hand was laid on my shoulder from behind, and, turning, there was Brother Moody! I had not met him since that day on the way to Pittsburg Landing. There was a smile now on his honest face, I was glad to notice; and, with no word of preface, he said, "You were all wrong that day in the saloon." And I answered, "Old friend, if I was ever all right in my life, it was in that afternoon on the steamer; and, if we must all answer for the deeds done in the body, my answer will be ready, and *don't you forget it!*" We parted then, and I saw him to speak to him no more.

## XVII

Our work at the hospitals was about the same as that we had done before, but more plentiful because there was much more to do. But one memory wakes up as I write, of one job I must tackle, painful then, but pleasant now,—of a man lying on a cot in a condition I cannot describe. He looked toward me with woe-stricken eyes. It was a bad case of camp fever, with all this means. There was so much to do for the wounded that the poor fellow had been left quite helpless in his misery. I saw at once what must be done. I went for towels, soap, and warm water, a clean mattress, bed linen, and a night-robe, also something for him to take,—my good milk and things. He brightened up when he had taken the milk, and was washed as a mother washes her baby, as he lay on the floor. The foul things were taken away, a brand-new bed was made, his night-robe put on, and, if I had been so minded, he was clean enough now to kiss, the poor forlorn soldier! and, when we left

## SOME MEMORIES

---

the hospital, he was getting well. I left him there, and went with a steamer loaded with the wounded down to Mound City, and then went home.

When Lawrence was wrecked by Quantrell and his guerillas with murder and burnings, the good heart of our city was moved to help her. A large sum of money was raised, and, being now, as I suppose, very much a minister at large, I was sent out with the money to relieve those who had survived the massacre and were in need of help. Jeremiah Brown—"Jerry," for short—went out with me. He was the brother of old John, knew Kansas like a book, and was useful to me as my right hand until the work was over and I came home to make a report in the *Chicago Tribune* of what we had seen and done.

Sixteen men who had gone from the homes in our city were sent home for burial, and arrangements were made for the services on the next Sunday in our largest hall. The caskets were laid side by side on the platform, draped or covered with the flags. They asked me to take the sermon; but there was no text that day and no sermon of the old pattern, only the story in simple sentences of what we had seen and what

## SOME MEMORIES

---

they had done. You felt the great heart beating the grand Amen, and in the psalms and songs. It is told in our Bible of one man that they buried him among the kings because he had done well in Israel. I think we gave our boys the nobler funeral that day. I can never forget that Sunday.

Many prisoners were sent to our city to be held in Camp Douglas, and a committee was elected to see that they were well cared for. I served on the committee, and live to vouch for the care taken for the prisoners. My heart was drawn to them in something more than pity, they were so forlorn; and, when I would talk with them, I found them so simple of heart and true to their own side still. They would say to me: "We were raised in the South, so were our folks; and we belong there now just as you belong in the North, and we fought for our rights. There was no other way, and we'll fight again if we get the chance. Can you blame us?" And I did not blame them, but did not tell. The government gave many of them the option to join our navy and be set free. Very few of them, so far as I remember, took the option; and, when I said to one of them, "Why do you not join our navy and be free?" he an-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

swered in wonder: "How can I do that? I could never go home again and look my folks in the face."

Many of them were country born and raised, and those who could not write would ask us if we would write a letter home and tell the folks they were alive and well, prisoners at Chicago; or one would blush and stammer trying to tell us what to write. It would be a maiden in that case; perhaps he would not be able to say the words he held in his heart, and we would help him out. Some of us grew quite clever in this sort of letter, and return to the days of our youth; and how glad we were as we would lend a hand!

The memory touches me now of going one morning through the hospital in the camp where a boy — he was no more — beckoned to me, and I went and sat down by his cot. He was very weak, and whispered to me, "Be you a minister, sir?" "Yes," I answered. "A Methodist?" "No." "A Baptist?" "No." This seemed to be the extent of his knowledge; for he said, "What be you, then, sir?" And, when I answered, "I am a Unitarian," he looked at me with a touch of wonder and said: "I never heard of them. What do you believe, sir? I

## SOME MEMORIES

---

am dying, and would like you to help me if you can." Then, in the simplest terms I could find in my heart, I told him of our faith in God our Father and of his Christ who came to tell us of his Father's love for all his children, not here and now alone, but forever here and hereafter. He drew a long breath with a sob in its heart when I had done, and said: "That is good, and I thank you, sir. Will you come to see me again, when you are in the camp?" I said "yes"; but, when I could go again, he was not there: he had gone to the Father with the message in his heart, a prisoner of hope.

So I sit here, and the memories awake of the great old time. Donelson comes out of the mystery of remembrance, and the day when I had a little spell of rest and stood alone by a bit of woodland in the early spring morning, and listened to the birds singing as sweetly and flitting about as merrily as if the tempest of fire and smoke but a week before was clean forgotten, when they were driven in mortal haste away, while at my feet a little bunch of sweet bergamot was putting forth the brown-blue leaves and a bed of daffodils was unfolding to the early spring sun. Our Mother Nature had sent down great rains to wash away the crimson stains, and

## SOME MEMORIES

---

for the moment there was peace. The general, whose name was now on all men's lips, rode past me in the near distance, smoking the inevitable cigar,—the first time I had seen him. The mounds were not far away, where our dead were laid side by side, with here and there a bit of board rudely fashioned with an inscription rudely written with a black lead-pencil by some comrade, to make good for a few days, if no more, the promise given to his friend, perhaps as they sat by the campfires a few days before the battle. The dead are buried, a soldier tells me, every man by his own company, and the prisoners are detailed to bury their own dead; but our men will not let them dig the grave or touch the body of one of their own comrades. These are held sacred even for the grave.

In the far-away time and in the motherland the Puritan and Cavalier came to the death-grip with each other; but now they sit by the same fireside, each proud of the other's valor in the mighty struggle. So in our great war Marston Moor clasps hands with Gettysburg in the fifteen decisive battles of the world; and now *we* are learning — nay, we have learned — to forget and forgive, to blend again in one



## SOME MEMORIES

---

family, because blood is thicker than water,—  
closer of kin now and more gentle and brotherly  
than we ever were when the awful curse of hu-  
man slavery lay over all the land.

## XVIII

This memory touches the battle of Fort Donelson, which resulted in the capture of the fort and sent the first clear shaft of light through the shadows which had lain like a pall over the loyal North since the conflicts at Bull Run and Manassas Junction in the previous summer, when we were so confident of an easy victory that the story was told of a chaplain in one of our regiments, who had prepared a sermon from the text, "Manassas is mine." He did not preach that sermon.

The capture of this important stronghold set the Northwest afire, and inspired our people afresh to make every sacrifice the great crisis might demand. This indeed was their purpose from the first; but here was a new springing forth of hope, while I well remember, when the first telegrams were flashed to our city, the news seemed almost too good to be true. But these were confirmed beyond all question presently, and then our city was almost insane for a time in her joy over the victory, as the reports took

## SOME MEMORIES

---

on a stormful splendor, while still we knew how weighted with woe the glad tidings must be for some of our neighbors and friends.

We had broken the great bell in the cupola of the court-house some time before, when the news came that Richmond had fallen, and the broken bell was all we had for our pains—and pleasure; for Richmond held her own through many a weary month from that day. But now all the bells in the town swung free, sound or broken we did not care, and went clanging over the prairies and the lake. The flags were shaken out to the wind from every window, and my grand old friend, the judge across our street, sent his flag flying among the first. He had three sons in the battle, and one of them was slain.

We had a good many citizens who were from the South, and their sympathies were there. They durst not unfurl their banners and would not unfurl ours. But men went quietly to see them in their homes, and said to them, "We leave it at your option for so many hours [or minutes as the humor took them] whether you will procure the flag of the Union and hoist it over your place or have no place for the hoisting." Men rushed everywhere through the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

streets, saying to each other, "Have you heard the news from Donelson?" Then they would grasp each other's hand, though they had never met before, and break into a laughter which ended not seldom in tears, as I can bear witness.

In the spring before this there had been such a throb of the heart through our city when the ark of our covenant was struck by the shot at Fort Sumter; and they knew, as all the North knew, this meant war with the manhood of our own blood and nurture. And then it was clear to the wise and able men in our city that the Southern point of the State where the great arterial rivers meet and run thence to the sea must be held at all odds. So the young men who stood ready volunteered at once for this service, and went down to Cairo. A number of fine young fellows from our own church were among them; and one of them told me how they intercepted a telegram from the Governor of Louisiana, who wanted to know about a vessel from Galena loaded with lead which was overdue, and they answered, "She is anchored off the point, and we will send down the cargo in small lots when we get a good ready."

Regiments and batteries were organized

## SOME MEMORIES

---

swiftly in answer to the first call from Washington, and the men were not drawn from the ruck and refuse of our city. They were from the very flower of our youth in that year, and the best,— young men from the stores, the offices, and the workshops. I speak of that I know and testify of that which I have seen. They were of the manhood which nourishes a fine ambition to rise, and were drawing good pay for those times. They leaped from their stools, closed their books, laid down the hammer, and enlisted in the ranks in hundreds for the rank and pay of the common soldier. I do not like that word “common” for those men.

And presently they came with a rush from Iowa and the Far West of that time. I can see them now in gray frocks and belted, made in their own towns and homes,— handsome, sound, and whole men. And, when they passed through our city, we fed them royally on their way to the front; for they were of our Western clans, and we were proud of them. They were our boys also.

So you may be sure, when the news came from the Southwest of the battle and victory at Donelson, Chicago could not be content just to ring her bells and shake out her banners again,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

or run through her streets with the tears breaking through her laughter.

We knew there must be great numbers there on the Cumberland — friends — yes, and foes, — and we could be as a very present help in the time of need if we could get there with such supplies of first help for the wounded as we could muster.

A meeting of our citizens was instantly called; and, as the memory steals out from the shadow of forty-two years, that meeting was one of the wonders. I think that, if some great gift had been waiting for each man who would come and ask for it, there could not have been a more eager company than that which came to the hall. Ask them a week before to leave the church, the bar, the sick, or the market, for almost any other reason, and they would not have heard you; but they needed no asking now. The client might swear, the church suspend her services, the business wait, and the patient find another physician: they would go to Donelson and look after the boys.

And as the men came, so supplies came for what I may call first aid for the wounded, so that we were able to get on board with no loss of time, take the train for Cairo, and from thence

## SOME MEMORIES

---

take a steamer up the river to the battlefield, and say, "Here we are: what can we do?"

But in Cairo, that mud hole in those days, we had to wait some hours for our steamer; and there I came on the first traces of the great conflict. Four of those long boxes we came to know so well were shells, nailed together in haste, holding the bodies of four officers sent home for the burial. There was a card on each, bearing the name of the man. They were laid on a low bank out of the mud; and, as I stood there, a man came to meet the body of his brother. There was some doubt touching his identity, so the shell was opened. I glanced at the fine strong face of the brother and then at that in the shell. There could be no doubt then that they were sons of the same mother. He must have died, I thought, instantly. There was not a line on the face to tell you of a protracted agony. It was the look rather of one who had fallen on sleep.

Presently I walked away into the mist, and I came on one of those bits of grim humor in which smiles blend with tears in this human life. A young soldier was sitting on the bank, with his feet in the mud, looking as if he did not quite know how to steer. He was wounded in

## SOME MEMORIES

---

the head, and had twisted a sort of turban over the wound, which was saturated with his blood. I said, "You are from Donelson?" And he answered, with no tone of dolor: "Yes: I was in the battle, where I got a bad clout on my head, So they sent me down the river, and I am going home to Indiana, where I will get well, and then come back and report."

So I said: "We are going up to help nurse the wounded, but I should like to begin here. Is there anything I can do for you?" He looked up shyly, saying: "Can you give me a bit of tobacco? I am out, and want some real bad, but have only just enough money for [I think he said grub] until I get home." I had no tobacco, but gave him some money and some over to help him home. He took it quietly, and said: "You are real good, sir. Would you like to see my head?" I shrank back, but he was already unwinding the turban. So he had his way. It was a very bad bulge well up in the forehead; and, when I said in wonder, "The bullet did not go in then?" he answered quite checrily: "No, sir: my head was too thick for the bullets of them rebs. It flatted and fell off. I got it here in my pocket. Like to see it?" He pulled the thing out and laid it in my hand,



## SOME MEMORIES

---

saying, with a touch of pride, "That ain't no use agin a head like mine." I must have given him my name and address; for one Sunday, some time after the war was over, a young man waited for me at the foot of the pulpit stairs, held out his hand with a smile, and said, "You don't know me, sir." This was true; but, when he lifted up a tuft of hair from his forehead and said, "See that?" I knew my man. He also laid the flatted bullet again in my hand, saying: "I am all right now, sir. I went back to my regiment, and kept my thick head safe and sound through the war, and took a notion to come up to Chicago and see you. I had to, for I will never forget how you acted about that tobacco."

When we came ashore, we went to find the men who had gone from our city. I went to find those from our church and their comrades. They gave us coffee; and, as we sat there, others came clustering about us, and after a while would fain have us tell them all about the home city. We told them how the city, when we left on the train, was afire with the news from the battlefield and the capture of the fort, and our words could be no more than an echo of those we heard everywhere, and then told them of our

## SOME MEMORIES

---

errand. We had come out at once not to look on, but to do whatever lay in our power to help all round. I went over the battlefield with Gen. Webster, who had command of the artillery through the three days. Something had been done already to clear away the wreck, and first of all the dead. But the woods and the open were still strewn with the dead horses and harness, shot and shell, while in one reach I counted three men who had not been buried, and in another, on the edge of the woods, there were eleven. And in a lone place aside, out of the way of the brush and the carnage, as if he had crept there — the poor fellow! — to die, was a soldier of the rebel army, with his blanket about him, a poor bit of a shawl his wife had given him, it may be, or his mother. He was poorly and thinly clad I could notice, but he could not feel the cold.

“His hands were folded on his breast;  
There was no other thing exprest  
But long disquiet merged in rest.”

He had done with it all, while in some home they were wondering if they should ever see his face again.

## XIX

This has been a word, and no more, about the battlefield. And now I must tell you of the work we went out to do. The small town of Dover was full of the sick and wounded men, huddled together anywhere until they could be removed. Surgeons, helpers, home-made nurses, we do what we can to help them where they lie, pour out our stores for them freely as water runs down hill; for the Sanitary Commission are burning the wires below in their eager haste to send up other stores almost as soon as we get there. Everything we could need was there. "Sanitary" is lord of the day.

When we had done what we could, there and then, a steamer was ready to take one hundred and sixty sick and wounded down the river to Mound City to a great hospital, and we went with them. They are laid so close on the floor of the long saloon that sometimes it is hard to set your foot between them. Here is one who has lost an arm, and there one who has lost a leg. Here is a gray-haired man, and there a

## SOME MEMORIES

---

boy of eighteen: they are shot through the lungs.

Here is a noble-looking soldier with a fearful wound over the eye, and there a yellow-haired German with blue eyes that appeal to me pitifully as I come and go, so that I feel I must attend to him, no matter who else waits. He has been mauled in the face, I find, so that he can take no nourishment and is perishing for lack of food. "What can I do for you?" I say, and he points first to his mouth, or rather where his mouth was, and then to his stomach. I am at a loss for some moments what to do, while the blue eyes watch me, eager and hungry; and then in a flash I see my way. I had rested some while in a state-room, and, as I was turning out, saw a pretty silvered funnel on a shelf above my head. So I bend over him and say, "I am going to get something into you, old man, or I will know the reason why; but you must help me for all you are worth." His tongue could not answer me, but his eyes said: "All right. I will do what you tell me."

I got a fine pitcher of milk from the stores, put a lot of sugar in it and something else, but will not tell you what that was. I had noticed a small slit in one corner of his mouth. "Now,"

## SOME MEMORIES

---

I said, "this small funnel will go in there, and this milk will go through into your stomach." And again he looked the amen he could not say. So I poured slowly, and the stream found no hindrance. I could hear the gurgle, and his blue eyes shone. I gave him all I dared, and then said, "That will do for now." But, as I passed him to help some other man, he would appeal to me with those eyes and point to the place where milk and things go. So we would have another turn of the pitcher. The woful concave changed slowly to the convex; and, before we left the steamer, the surgeon said, "That fellow will get well." And, do you believe it, I think that by Heaven's blessing on the milk and things I saved the blue-eyed boy's life.

The surgeon comes to a young man close by me, as I attend to that mouth, and says, "I fear I must take off your arm." He begs to have him leave it on a while longer, no matter for the pain. So the good surgeon leaves him, and he moans to me: "What shall I do if I lose my arm? There is only myself left to look after my old mother and the farm. I must save that arm." And, before we leave the steamer, the surgeon tells me the arm will be saved. Here is a man I must attend to who has lost his arm and is sink-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

ing into the shadows. And, as I lay cool wet linen on the stump, he tells me, in broken sentences, he has left a wife and two young children at home he will never see again, and gives me a glance into his brave soul in asking me what hope there may be for him when he passes through the gates. He has always tried to do right, he says, and to be a man, but never professed religion. "You will go right home to God, your Father and mine," I told him, "never you fear." With some more words from my heart he is comforted, and, as I come and go, I watch the face grow white. He is very quiet now. I ask a good, sweet Presbyterian deacon, a neighbor of ours in the city, to watch with him. The lovely, sweet soul is quite of my mind about the future for such a man, and, when all is over, he comes to tell me how he had put up the one hand gently when the end came, closed his own eyes, and then laid the hand softly on his breast and was no more, no more, and yet forevermore *that man*.

That boy on the bulkhead is shot through the lungs, and all day long, and through the night, he is in sore anguish; but at last the pain ceases, and he beckons to one of my comrades and says: "I shall die now; and will you do me a great

## SOME MEMORIES

---

kindness? Write to my father when I am gone," naming a small rural nook in Indiana as the address, "and tell him I am dead." And I said it was all right. "And tell him I owe such a man four dollars and a half, and such a man owes me four dollars; and will he make things straight for me, as I came away in a hurry? And father must draw my pay and keep it all." Then he lay silent for a while, but woke up again and said to me, "I have been dreaming about home, and had a drink out of the old well in our door-yard: it did taste so good!" And then, while we looked on the lad, his eyes grew dim. He had left us as we looked. He also went up in his chariot of fire. Neither shall he thirst any more, but drink

"From life's fair stream, fast by the throne of  
God."

This was what we found to do day and night on the steamer. One would be a surgeon's assistant when he was needed; some of us grew clever at that work. I was one, the surgeon told me; but that is another story. Then we went about with cool water and soft lint and linen, nice choices of food and sips of wine by the doctor's leave; but they liked my milk and things

## SOME MEMORIES

---

best. And they would tell us about their home and folks after we had got a bit intimate.

This man, strong and bearded, was hurt twice in the battle, and went away from the surgeon's hands, as he said, to have another try for it. He was struck the third time, and said, "I guess this is the finish." And it was. That boy stood in the fight, I was told, like one of Napoleon's old guard. I found, as I talked with him, he was an old-fashioned, iron-clad, close communion Baptist. He had just strength enough, an officer told me, after he was hurt to crawl into the bushes, and then he began to pray with all his might, not for himself — he was all right — but for the God of battles to give the victory to the flag of the Union. "And there's a man," one said to me, "an officer as you see. His company was badly thinned early in the first day of the fight. Well, he took the musket and ammunition from one of his men who lay dead, and said: 'Boys, we are short-handed. I guess I will go into the ranks a spell.' He fought all day with his company, but now he will fight no more."

This is the story of the old battlefield, told in the fitful fashion, but not half told. I am there again, as I look through the long vista



## SOME MEMORIES

---

of the years, and am by no means sure that I have done.

War is hell, the great commander said. Yes, I would answer, war is hell. But these memories steal out, and then I say, Is this all? And I turn to the seer's vision in the Holy Book and read: "There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought the dragon and his angels, and the dragon was cast out." And then I ask, What do these things mean?

## XX

The church, I was glad to find, suffered no loss by the minister's absence at Donelson, Pittsburg Landing, and Lawrence; for, indeed, after my return from the long spell in Washington and Missouri, I was never absent, for more than two Sundays, while the people were as eager to send me on those errands as I was to go.

Also on the first Sunday after my return I never thought of preaching a sermon, but told them the story of what we had seen and done in the hospitals and on the steamers in words close of kin to the memories you have read, I trust, while they would listen with blended smiles and tears. There would be a lesson also, and this would usually be one of the old fighting psalms; for these were in great favor with us in those times; a psalm and then a prayer, with psalms and songs sung very much as they were sung on that memorable first Sunday, but in softer tones, as when we sing the requiems for the dead, and deep calleth unto deep in the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

heart's reverence and love. The immortal numbers of one of the chief singers in our Israel,—

“ Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming  
of the Lord,”—

were pulsing before their birth-time in the strong heart of the nation. Nor could the church be content merely to spare her minister: she must also be up and doing. The women organized at once to work for the Sanitary Commission, the needle to help heal the hurts of the sword, to help take care also of the regiments which poured through the city, as well as the sick and wounded. Money also was needed, and on a Sunday morning after the service fifteen hundred dollars was subscribed in less than so many minutes for any and every demand.

Mr. Emerson was in the church that morning, was to go home with me to dinner; and, as we went away from the church, he said, with a tremor in his voice, “ I must give you something also.” And when I said, “ I think we shall have enough, sir,” he answered, “ It will be well to have more than enough,” as he passed some bank-notes into my hand. I was glad to notice also that our congregations grew steadily larger Sunday by Sunday, until they quite filled the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

church. The newcomers were not of our faith as a rule; but they took pews and sittings, and were in full sympathy with the spirit and purpose of the church, and wanted so far to be counted in, while at the end of the first year of my ministry and through the years to come, the good early years, the foretelling of the dear helpmeet came true,—the well did not run dry or the bucket often scrape the sand, so that I almost ceased to be afraid of the next Sunday by Wednesday.

Then of course we must start a Sunday-school, the children's church and nursery. So this was done; but I was troubled over the small number that came to the school, and told the people this would never do: we must have all the children we could muster in the parish who were old enough to come.

They made no answer to my cry; but one day one of the members came to talk with me about it, and said: "You know this is a young church, and the most of us are young people. There is only one gray head in the whole membership of the church to-day, so you must be patient. We send all we have to our name who are old enough to come, and, as those who are too young come along, we will send them also;

## SOME MEMORIES

---

for we want to have, and shall have, a real good Sunday-school, only give us time." And in the fulness of time there was no room for complaint: they made good his promise.

Our Sunday-school from first to last was an open trust. We made all the children welcome who came in, and drew no line between our own and the children of the stranger within our gates. The North Side was then, and may be still, the German quarter; and in the course of time, when there was ample room in the new church we shall hear about anon, children from the German homes came, not ragged or forlorn. German mothers do not know how to let their children go ragged! They were all whole and wholesome. My other "right hand" took hold and gathered a large class of the youngest, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, mothering them. And here I touch a lovely memory. I had noticed a new boy in the circle about her with a great rough head and an uncouth backward look in his eyes; and, after we came home one Sunday, I said, "Mother, what do you make of that new boy with the great head?" "Not much yet awhile," she answered cheerily. "About all I can do for him so far is to wipe his nose. But there is

## SOME MEMORIES

---

something in that boy: he will be worth his salt." And he was. Some years ago I was in Chicago, and of course must take the services and sermon in the dear church of my first love. After the sermon the host of old friends waited to greet me; and among the first to push to the front, was a young man of a clear, fine presence and well clad, who held out his hand with an eager motion and said, "You will not know me, sir; but I was in Mrs. Collyer's class in the Sunday-school, and I can never forget how good she was to me." There was what we call an earmark on the boy, and there it was on the young man. So I told him how glad I was that he should tell me this and thank me in her name who was no more with us. He was in business and prosperous, with a home of his own now and a small family. The means of grace for the small German boy began away down there at the base line.

And here I must dwell on another memory touching the children. When the church was well established, her heart was moved to take another step in his name who took the little children in his arms and blessed them. There were some back streets on our side of the river in a poor neighborhood where the children were

## SOME MEMORIES

---

sadly neglected, and the good women said, "We must see what can be done to help them." So they rented a large room and started a day home in about the centre of the quarter, to which the children could come and be cared for through the day and return to their homes in the evening. They were to be taught and fed, bathed, and their poor clothing made decent or replaced. It was not what we call welcome work. I remember a Saturday afternoon when I met one of the faithful workers, a perfect lady in one of our best families. She looked tired; and, when I said, "Are you not well?" she answered with a smile, "I am well, but tired: I have just bathed sixteen of our children in the day home."

The doors opened easily, and there was a warm welcome for the children. There was some trouble at the start. Many of the children were from homes of the Catholic parentage, and the rumor spread that the day home was started to train them away from their mother church. So a priest came to see what those women were doing, found it was a false rumor altogether, and bid them God-speed in the good human enterprise. They taught them to be honest and true and helpful, and were greatly

## SOME MEMORIES

---

encouraged; for one of them came to me one day and said, with a tone of satisfaction: "You have no idea how those children improve! They steal nothing now but mitts and thimbles." And one day again she told me how a small girl had come in she had not seen before, a forlorn and neglected child, who sat down quietly, apart from the other children, and was heard to murmur to herself, "It's just like heaven, and there's no flies." It was a sweltering day in the heart of summer; and, if it be true, as the old Assyrians held, that Beelzebub is the god of flies, I thought there must have been a legion of his creatures in the poor place on Market Street that day from which the child had wandered into our cool, sweet day home.

In no long time they must have a matron to take charge of the place and the children and "mother" them, and they found a woman I have always thought of as one elected from heaven for that work,—a maiden lady of the middle age from Concord, Mass.; but, after all too brief a time, she was taken from them by the white angel, Death. The children came always to our Easter festival, when plants and flower seeds were given them to take to their homes and nurse. The good matron's funeral



## SOME MEMORIES

---

service was held in the church, to which they all came, bringing the flowers they had nursed, — all they had as I guess. I was abroad that summer when she died, but they told me how the children came and laid the flowers on the casket with tears and lamentations. They had lost the mother who had blessed them in His name through the two or three years. The day home is still open, doing its noble and beautiful work. Eli Bates, who was one of the founders and most munificent maintainers of the church through many years, left the money at his death to build a home for the good work and for the matchless statue of Lincoln by St. Gaudens at the entrance of Lincoln Park, and for other good uses I need not name. And now no sweeter memories of my ministry through the twenty years in our old home city abide in my heart than these of the good day home.

## XXI

Now I must return to the church and my own work there, in which we were as one family in our work and worship; and I was quite content with my hearing, with no thought of a wider. But after some time eager souls in the society began to talk about a new adventure. It was a far cry forty years ago from the South and West Sides to Chicago Avenue on the North Side where our church stood then, to which some came from the distance; but with this they were not content. We must go to them who would not come to us, they said. So they proposed to hire a hall, the Metropolitan Hall, the only one of note the city had to her name in those early times; and, if I was willing to take hold and do the preaching, they would see to the funds, and we would hold services there on Sunday evenings. A good many would come to the hall, they said, who would not go to a church. So, while I was not hopeful at all about the enterprise, I said, "I will take the services and see what can be done." These

## SOME MEMORIES

---

services were held through one year. The congregations were large right along. Very few of our own people came. Our own people are inclined to think that two sermons on Sunday are like two pellets in a potato popgun: the one drives the other out. Those who came were mostly what we call outsiders of the brand that "go nowhere"; but they came to these meetings, and, after they closed, some came to the church and joined us there. And for many years after some one would tell me he or she had attended the meetings and been helped by them. Indeed, when I was near the eightieth milestone in this journey, a gentleman spoke to me in our church, told me he had attended those services, and still remembered the sermon I preached about what it is to be forty. That sermon with so many more was burnt in the great fire also, yet I still think it was not *very* dry.

May I mention one memory which can never grow dim, and went into my heart to stay, while perhaps I should leave it in "the silence of the breast"?

Some years after those meetings a gentleman wrote me from California, to tell me how he had found a poor fellow who had fallen very

## SOME MEMORIES

---

low and was dying, friendless and alone. "I did what could be done for him; and, on the last day I was with him, he told me he had lived in Chicago before he came here, and had attended those services in the hall. Then he reached under his pillow for a small photograph and said: 'This is the picture of the man I heard preach there. I have always saved it. And now will you be so kind, sir, as to pin it on that curtain? I want to see his face the last I can see before I die.' And it was so." How I love the memory for his sake, the hapless man!

All sorts and conditions of men and women came to the hall, and other memories might be touched, but not now, except to say that some came from Boston, eminences who were in the lecture-field,—Wendell Phillips, I think, and Mr. Emerson, who said to me, as we walked from the hall, very kind and heartening words about the sermon I cannot remember and yet cannot forget: my brethren in the ministry will know what I mean. Some things I had said were also printed in the *Christian Register*—thanks be!—and in other journals. And then something befell I could no more have dreamed of than the little maid of two years in our home.

An invitation came asking me to take the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

services for a Sunday in Music Hall, where Theodore Parker had preached, with a matchless power and an eloquence quite unique, for ten years, and before this through seven years in the old Melodeon. He died in May, 1860. Five years ago last summer I laid my hand in reverence on his grave in Florence. Since his death the pulpit-platform had been "supplied." It was a great wonder, this invitation, but was so warm that I could not say them nay; and so I went down, as we say, with my heart in my mouth, to find such a crowd as I had not dreamed of, and the hall so vast that, when I had spoken for two or three minutes, the fear clutched me that I was not heard. So I paused and held out my hand to a man in the far-away top gallery who was leaning forward listening, as it seemed, for all he was worth, and said quietly, "Can you hear me, sir, up there?" He moved his head with emphasis the right way. I thanked him. There was a broad smile all over the place, and I went on to the end, with no more fear about that which is high. And they thanked me with effusion; you may trust Boston for that — leastwise I do and have done these forty years — and I went home rejoicing. I had been heard in Music Hall.

## SOME MEMORIES

---

Then in no long time, to my still greater wonder, a "call" came from the society to come down and be their minister. It was a strong and urgent invitation, signed by Mr. Emerson, Wendell Phillips, and other men of note, with a letter also of sixteen pages from Wendell Phillips, setting forth the reasons why I should come and must come. But I may say in all sincerity that, so far as I remember, the day never came when I was tempted to hear that call. I knew in some way what I could do, but beyond all dubitation what I could not do. No light shone for me on Music Hall: it lay on my church in Chicago. I must stay right there, and the wisest of all my counsellors said I must not go. So I said, "I cannot come," and this was final. This was forty years ago, and there has been no moment when I have felt I was mistaken; but, if I should say I was not moved, that would not be true, or the church was not glad when I told them about my conclusion. They gave us a reception and a feast of fat things, but not "with wine on the lees well refined."

Another call came presently that searched me through and through, from the Second Church in Brooklyn. Their minister, Nahor A.

## SOME MEMORIES

---

Staples, a man of brilliant and most beautiful promise, was dead. He was dear to me as Jonathan was to David, was the minister of our church in Milwaukee when we went West; and it was on my part certainly a case of love at first sight. We would write to each other once a week about the Sunday's sermons, to find usually how nearly we had touched the same thought and theme, and tease each other now and then as lovers will — I mean men of course. One week I wrote to him in great glee. A man of eminence in the city, who had come to our church, was taken insane, and would not have any man save myself in his room. And so I was with him about two weeks, until the proper arrangements were made to care for and keep him. The family was grateful for such service as I could give, and made me a handsome present; for they were very rich. I needed a good watch. The children had mauled the old one until it was no good. So we agreed, in the living-room, that I should have a good one of *gold* with part of the money. It is beating over my heart as I write. Then I must needs tell my dear friend all about it; and, in his answer to my letter, he said: "I am glad you have got the gold watch, but I think my preach-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

ing will never drive any man out of his mind. So I shall have to wear my old silver machine to the end of time." He resigned his charge in Milwaukee early in the war, to be chaplain of the Seventh Wisconsin Regiment; but his health broke, and after some months he found he must resign. Rev. Samuel Longfellow had been the minister, and the first, if I remember well, of the Second Church in Brooklyn through some years, and had done a right good work there, but had resigned. Then Mr. Staples was called to the church, and it was a memorable ministry; but the seeds of consumption, which had been furthered, if not sown, when he was chaplain, began presently to germinate. We had kept in close touch with each other and had been much together in one or more summer vacations. He was still the friend dearest to me in the brotherhood; and, when I found the end was near, I came down to his home and was with him in the last moments. Went with the dust to the burial at Mendon, Mass., his native place; and on the next Sunday preached some sort of memorial sermon to his people.

He had said he would love to have them call me; but to this, so far as I remember, I made no answer. I think he had also suggested this



## SOME MEMORIES

---

to some members of the church, but am not sure, only that a call came presently; and now I do remember the pain it gave me to say I could not come. The light lay on the church I loved. I could not leave them even for his sake and theirs who I was sure would fain have me come. This was forty years ago, if I am right in the memory. And now I can truly say that through all the years I have felt only and always the same deep satisfaction that I could not hear the call, as I am prone to think they have also; for they found the one man, as I love to believe, in the whole brotherhood of our ministers who could fill the chasm made by my brother's death — my son as I have loved and love still to call him — John White Chadwick, whose praise is in all our churches, our noble minister in holy things, and sweet singer whose hymn, "It singeth low in every heart," will still be sung when he and we are all a handful of dust.

## XXII

The time came, before the war was ended, when we began to talk about a new church. We were still growing; and, when a young church has no room to grow, it will begin to grow stunted. Our audience-room had to serve all purposes. We had no Sunday-school room, lecture-room, or place for social gatherings, and were cramped at every turn. So early in 1865 some of the leading men in the church secured a lot, as the first step to be taken in the new enterprise; and in June there was another, and this time a most pleasant surprise sprung on me.

I was tired with the long strain of such service as I could render in the war and the church and parish, but did not tell the people or indeed quite know myself; but the truth is I was preaching *tired* sermons, some of them so poor and fatuous that they made me sick, and I burnt them off-hand. The wise heads in the church knew what was the matter; and on a Saturday evening one of them came to see me and said,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

“We want you to take a good rest this summer, to go over to your old home and see the folk; and here is a check for your expenses.” The money the church gave me then and afterward before I started would have been equal to three years’ steady work at the anvil, so generous they were and eager to send me home rejoicing. This was fifteen years after we landed in New York; and in the six years of our life in Chicago I had dreamed that some time in the future I might be able to cross the ocean to the old homeland, see my mother again, the kinsfolk and the many friends. And, lo! here I was bidden to go forthwith “gold to give and gold to spend.”

I would fain have the dear home mother go with me; but here the promise — “Whither thou goest I will go” — must not be thought of. She must mind the home and the children, who were too young to leave. So I went alone, and all the way over on the steamer — New York — I dreamed dreams and saw visions. I had told them I was coming, made a bee-line from Liverpool to Leeds; and, when I came to the home where my mother was, walked right in, — no knocking at that door of all the doors on the earth. She was sitting in the same old chair

## SOME MEMORIES

---

where I had left her; but I think it was not the same house, and her hair now was white as snow. I said, "Mother." She looked up with a touch of wonder, and said, "My lad, I do not know thy face, but that is thy voice." And then she rose up and kissed me, while the tears ran down her fine old face. Presently I must go to Ilkley, where I had lived twelve years as boy and man; and there for the first time in my manhood I kissed a *man*, my dear old friend John Dobson, who had done more for me in loving care and counsel, as I have said before, than any or perhaps all the men I had known through those years so momentous to a youth. He had kept track of my life through the fifteen years, and was well aware of the change in my Christian fellowship; but he did not turn a hair. And, when I preached in our Unitarian church in Leeds, he came to hear me, and was still the same fast friend, *heart fast*. My mother also went with me that morning; and I still remember so well, as we walked home arm in arm after the service, she said, "I am not sure that I understood all thy sermon, my lad, or can believe as thou does; but I do believe in thee." Then she squeezed my arm, and I was quite content. It is among

## SOME MEMORIES

---

the pleasant memories also of my first visit that I found every one of the kinsfolk and friends I had longed to see once more alive and well, and that I could fall easily into the dialect, as we sat by the fireside, I had taken so much pains to revise or lay away when I found my way into the pulpit. That was the first, and lay deepest in my nature. And so I may say, as the conclusion of this memory, my first visit was the cream of the bowl.

Another memory follows I have hesitated to dwell on, but find I must, foolish as it may seem to you, but dear to me; for here I returned to the days of my youth. It was twenty-seven years then since I had left the place where I was brought up. My people left the year after, so that I had not cared to cross the moor more than once or twice in the twelve years of my life in Wharfedale; and I was "as a child that is weaned from his mother." But, when we were well rooted down in the new life, memories of the old home-nest in Washburndale began to steal out from the mists and grow ever more dear to me as they do to us all who leave the old life for the new. The longing grew strong to make pilgrimage there if the way should open, and be just a boy once more by

## SOME MEMORIES

---

the grace of heaven. And I knew what I wanted to see and to do when I came there. There was one well at which I would drink my fill, for the water was as sweet to my heart as the water was to David in the well of Bethlehem by the gates. Then there was the great holly-bush on the hill, where as a boy I had gone year after year to look at the blackbird's nest, where one year, as I remembered still, that brigand, the cuckoo, had laid an egg, and when I went one evening to see how the blue pen fledglings fared, there was the young cuckoo sprawling all over the place, while the young blackbirds lay on the grass below. There was also that shadowy reach in the stream where the water came down from the moor to turn the great overshot wheel for the factory, and at the mouth of the tunnel the biggest trout I ever failed to catch. He would look at me and shake his tail, as if he would say, "It is no use: I am here to stay," and then float quietly into the tunnel. Then there were those swallows that came every year to build their nests under the eaves of one house right in the sun's eye, and went away when the summer waned, after sitting in council on the roof-tree,—went

## SOME MEMORIES

---

I knew not where, and even my father could not tell me. And there was the one oak-tree in the pasture where I would sit and dream, when the fit was on me, of the great and wonderful world beyond the valley and the moors. I seemed to own that oak.

So I would dream of these in my new life, and wonder if they were all there as when I left them. Well, I lost scant time when I came to my old home-nest; and, will you believe me, the blackbird's nest was there in the holly-bush, and the old birds were busy feeding their young. I stood quietly at some small distance. They did not seem afraid of me, and I wondered if they had chattered the tradition down of the boy who came to look at the nest and never harmed or robbed them. Yes, and the same old trout was there, or another perhaps not quite so big. But he knew the old trick with the tail after taking my photograph on those eyes, and floated away into the dark. The beryl brown water in the well was sweet also to me as the water in the well by the gate was to the soldier and king, and I drank my fill. But the swallows came no more to build their nests under the eaves and sit in council on the roof-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

tree. The quiet home had been turned into a noisy beer saloon, and they would not stay, the good swallows.

There was the oak on the slope of the pasture too, my oak; but it seemed to have grown smaller in the many years. I was staying with the owner of the pasture, who remembered our family and kept the inn. He went with me over the place, and, when we came to the tree, I said, "It is not nearly so large, sir, as it was when I was a boy." But he answered: "It is larger. Your eyes are not the same: they are the eyes of a grown man." But before we left the pasture he said: "It may be the tree needs some nourishing after all. But, whether or no, for the sake of old lang syne I will spread a load of manure about the roots, happen that will help it to grow a bit faster." And after I came home I heard this had been done. And now do you say this is indeed speaking as a child, you should put away childish things, you old man of fourscore? I have but one answer. I was a child and a boy again for one good week in the old home-nest; or, if you say the boy is father of the man, I was that boy's son with the white hair already stealing over and through the brown.



## SOME MEMORIES

---

In the mountains of New Hampshire one summer my host told me of a man who had come from "away out West" to find what was left of the old home where he was raised. There was a well on the place. The waters were sweet to him as mine were to me. He had brought his three daughters with him; and, when they came to the well, there was a dipper. But this would not do. He must needs kneel down on one stone, as he had done in the old time, to drink; and, when he rose from the worship at his holy well, he said: "Now, daughters, you must all kneel down on that stone, and drink for father's sake. Never mind your gowns. If you hurt them, you shall have new ones. I can buy them, but money cannot buy what kneeling on that stone means to me." And I am brother in this way to the man I never saw to whom the waters were so sweet.

There are many more memories I must not touch, of my visit to the old home-nest, but tell you now that, when the time came to return, I was quite as glad to take my steamer and come home as some ten weeks before I had been to *go* home. More glad, indeed; for here were my treasures and here my life. For, when we have come here to find what we found, the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

heart is not divided; and it is not needful for us to "be sure we are off with the old love before we are on with the new," because the heart in us grows large enough to hold both without the least constriction. But, when we come here, if we can find nothing so good or fair as it was in England, shall I say, or Scotland, then the best we can do is to stay there, or, if we are here, to go home again.

So I came home most gladly; for here we had found room, my wife and I, to grow and to be as we never could have found it in the dear and ever dear motherland.

### XXIII

On my welcome home I must not linger: that was all the heart could desire. I will venture to say also that my rest and re-creation was a good investment. Such sermons as I could preach did not make me sick of heart. I found also that the purpose to build was no "will-o'-the-wisp," but a steadfast purpose. Subscriptions were made large and generous: the building committee was chosen, and the architect. And the story was told — I will not vouch for it — that the committee instructed him to measure the largest Protestant church in the city, and draw the plans for ours a foot longer and a foot wider. I say I do not vouch for that story. The plans were drawn, and the architect reported that the foundation on which the northern tower must stand was not safe. The mother church on the South Side had built a tower on such a foundation, and it had sunk, bringing a part of the wall down with it. So great piles were driven down for our north tower, to make all safe and sound. The corner-stone was laid

## SOME MEMORIES

---

in August, 1867; and then our temple grew as grows the grass. No labor troubles or in the board. As I sit here I hear only the sounds of the workmen. The wisest and best master-builder in the city, to my own mind, George Chambers, a member of the church, saw to the upbuilding. He was not a rich man; but, when the board called for his bill, he said, "There is no bill: this is my subscription." There was but one man hurt, a laborer, whose shoulder was bruised by a stone. The chairman of the committee sent him home and told him to stay there until he was well, and his wages would be paid. Many weeks passed before Mr. Hubbard thought it was time to look him up, and sent a man to see how he fared, who reported that he had been well some weeks, but had not felt like reporting for work, only well enough to draw his wages, for which he sent his wife.

Our sister church, Orthodox Congregational, on the next corner to ours had built a beautiful edifice, and had set a fine fragment from Plymouth Rock over the main doorway. This was all right, but we must also have a stone of memorial to set over our main doorway. I mused and pondered about that stone quite a while; and then one day the idea flashed on me

## SOME MEMORIES

---

that I must write to a lady, a member of our church, who was staying at Geneva in Switzerland, and ask her if it was possible to procure a stone from the very spot on the hill above the city where Servetus, our faithful martyr, stood when he was burnt by the fiat of Calvin, and send it over to set above the main doorway of the new church. She saw the proper authorities, and they gave her leave, as she told me, most cheerfully to take the stone; and, when she went with a man to do the delving, there was quite a company assembled, who gave her a cheer. They also were glad to have the stone sent over to stand for a memorial in the church built by those of the faith their martyr died to maintain as he had lived. It came to us safe and sound, and was duly set over our main doorway, with the inscription, "Champel, 1553." And I may mention the fact, before I pass on, that in the great fire which so soon laid our beautiful church in ruin the stone was not touched, or a large space of the wall, where it continueth unto this day.

It was indeed a beautiful church, and good as hands could make it. The first purpose was to build the front and the side walls of stone and the back of brick which would come cheaper.

## SOME MEMORIES

---

I did not like this, but would love to see the back stone also, and, as we say, all of a piece; and there were others of my mind. So the vote was like to be about even when one said: "Suppose the Lord should come up from the lake. The first thing he would see would be the brick back, and he would not like it." It was only a bit of humor, a feather-weight, as it were; but it turned the scale. I see the lovely interior of the great audience-room across the mists of thirty-two years, the wood-work blended of butternut and black walnut, the roof azure, set with stars; but the stars were a mistake, and, I am real sorry to say, a sham, the only false note in the fine harmony. They were stuck on I know not how, but still remember how after some time there would here and there one get loose and come teetering down like butterflies on the congregation.

In the summer of 1869 the church was dedicated. Dr. Bellows came from New York to preach the sermon, with quite a gathering of the brethren from far and wide to take some part in the services. The church was of one mind,—that I should write a hymn of dedication. I had never done such a thing. Still, the hymn was written, and, as the Scotch say,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

I thought it "was no that bad." You will find it in our service and hymn book if you care to look it up. I use it once a year when we open the church after the summer vacation, but at no other time, and was glad some years ago when Dr. Hunter, then the minister of the great Congregational church in Glasgow, but now of the Weigh House Chapel in London, wrote to ask me if he might print the hymn in a book he was compiling for his church. I was glad to give him the liberty. It is also in an Episcopal collection used in England. Dear friends, pardon the toot once more. It was my first venture, my first-born in this sort, and I may plead I have only written one more: that was for the restoration after the great calamity,—the Chicago fire.

Dr. Johnson said of Dr. Watts's hymns, "He has done the best where no man has done well." And I am satisfied to think I did my best, while Gabriel could do no more. It was a grand sermon and a noble service. The church, still in her youth of ten years, had subscribed generously when we set out to build, and, when the fund was exhausted, built by faith, which was not exhausted; and the order was made for a subscription on the day of dedication. The

## SOME MEMORIES

---

committee saw Dr. Bellows about this and the debt which must be reduced and would be on that day; and toward the close of his great discourse he took hold of the question as he only could, and set the people a-fire. I have witnessed no such fervor in all these years for this purpose as on that day. It was my lot to stand up before them to say such words as came to me, and report the subscriptions. They pelted me with them large or small, and the small, as I well knew, large for the givers, bless them! I had wanted every man, woman, and child to take part and lot in the good work, and I think this was done that morning. Quite a number who had given gave again. Good men were there from the mother church, gave nobly, and some Methodists from the church near at hand. Saints and sinners were all of one mind; and I mention the sinners, because I still remember one man I loved for his manfulness, but could not quite call him a saint. He gave a large subscription, and, when we made the second rally, called out a thousand dollars more. This was a surprise to me. I met him on the street soon after, and thanked him. "Do you know," he said, "why I chipped in again?" "Yes," I said. "It was because you have a



## SOME MEMORIES

---

big heart.” “Not at all,” he answered cheerily. “But when Dr. Bellows got that ship in the storm [meaning the church], you know, and said, ‘Will you let her go down under her load?’ I said, ‘I will be —— [something very bad] if I do for one.’ So I gave the other thousand.” And I hoped the angel of the records missed or left out the bad word. I have no idea how far we should have gone that day when the doctor said to me: “Stop now, and sit down. They have done enough. In all conscience do not ask them for any more money.” So I sat down. We sang,—

“From all that dwell below the skies.”

The great and good man — for he was both, and among the greatest and best I have known — gave us the benediction, and we went on our way rejoicing. They had subscribed about sixty thousand dollars! The records of the church were all lost in the fire, so that I cannot give the figures. I notice in a book printed in England the amount is given of seventy thousand, but I think this is not true.

I saw a picture some years ago in a gallery which blends with the memory of our brave, new church. In the foreground was a pretty

## SOME MEMORIES

---

farmstead almost mint new, and in the background a log house on the edge of the clearing, deserted and almost hidden in wild pines. There was only one human figure in the picture, the good man of the farmstead, leaning on a rail fence and looking at the log house with the light in his eyes, the tender light of the days that are dead. That was once his house, as I read the story, where he came long ago with his newly wedded wife to make a home, and there their children were born and raised; and the memories of the old home thronged in his heart as he leaned on the fence. So there was a touch of tender regret in our hearts I think, or know rather, when we were homed in the large and good new church. The old home, to be sure, was not deserted: it was bought and occupied by the Baptist society whose smaller church we rented for our first services; and my small boy was much interested when they put down what he called their bath tub. Yet it was still our old home where we "had such good times," while we were proud of the new one. That was all the heart could desire, with a much larger congregation, and all the room we wanted for every purpose. Yet, as I sit here this morning, I see the first home in the tender

## SOME MEMORIES

---

light of the days that are dead, not with sorrow, but with thanksgiving, for the good times in the span of the ten years.

Two good and fruitful years were given us in the new church, in which I for one certainly began to feel very much at home, and then the great calamity fell on our city when the church and the homes were whelmed in the common ruin. This memory I must touch at a later time.

## XXIV

My dear old friend, the editor, says, in a note that came the other day, "I have not wanted to remind you of the memories I promised our readers should be completed when you struck work last spring, and we shall be glad to begin again when you are ready."

It was a true and timely word, subject to a slight correction. Paul says, a man who desires to be a bishop should be "no striker," and herein I plead not guilty. The truth is I was tired and wanted to take a vacation, quite intending to finish them in the fall or the early winter. But in the fall the spirit did not move me — my editor will know what I mean — or they did not seem ripe for the reaping. So, like the men in the parable, I began to make excuses; and my failure, with many more in all these years, must be counted once more among the good intentions that I love to imagine pave the way to heaven.

I notice, as you may perhaps remember who read the twenty-three chapters, that we had

## SOME MEMORIES

---

begun to feel at home in the brave new church, too large as yet for our need, but not for our hope and our fine ambition, while we still loved to remember the little church on the corner in which we met for worship and work about nine years. The Baptist society had bought the dear old place, and this was all to the good for me, because my mother was a Baptist, and would be glad to hear of this. And I had said to our people, when the place became too strait for us, when we have no more room to grow, we shall begin to grow stunted.

Well, there was no danger now in that direction. And then I remembered what my mother would say to our tailor when he came to measure me for a new suit: "Make it big, John: give him plenty of room to grow into the things. He will be sure to outgrow them before he has another suit." And this was true, for I was a lusty fellow; but for what you would call a good fit, when I donned them, they were a sight to see, and sadly discounted the joy and pride of the Easter Sunday when we went to the old mother church two miles away where we were all baptized. The church in which Edward Fairfax, the uncle of the great general, and who made the first and still the best translation

## SOME MEMORIES

---

of the "Jerusalem Delivered," was buried in 1635 "under a marble tomb," and who in 1620 fell into sore trouble touching the witchcraft done on his daughter, of which he wrote the story I may tell in brief when I have finished these memories.

I told the story of the garments in some speech or sermon to the people for a parable, wherewith they were well pleased when I made the application; for we all love parables which encourage the hope that is not seen, and mine came true. The big church was well filled in the first year: the Sunday-school also prospered finely. There was ample room for our social gatherings, and then in the early spring of 1871 there came a great wonder. I was invited to preach the sermon at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association in London.

I could not have dreamed of so great an honor had I been a dreamer, and I did not let I dare not wait upon I would, when I read the letter; for my impulse was to say *no* in the cleanest words I could muster, and thank them with all my heart. But now the dear helpmeet, who was always my very present help in trouble, wheeled promptly into line, after we had held the home

## SOME MEMORIES

---

council, and said I must accept the invitation, I must not say no. I must go, and she would go with me, she did not say to hold up my hands, and my heart, and there was no need. We would also take the little lassie with us whose health had failed. The sea voyage and the change of climate would do more for her than all the doctors. This was another weight in mother's end of the scale, and my end went up. And, if she had not been out of health, she must still have gone with us: she was our youngest daughter, and her mother's bairn. The sisters were well and strong: they could be left in good care, and indeed could care for themselves and the home. But Annie clave to her mother, who still remembered how she must leave her two summers before when her own health failed, and I must bring her down to the seaside; remembered how, when we came home, she crept into her arms one day and said, "Mamma, when you were away, I was so lonesome I used to go into the closet and hug your dresses." How often mother would tell the tiny story, so sweet and pathetic, as we would sit alone, when the dear child was translated so that she should not see death; and how, when her own health was broken and the end drew near,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

she would say, "I want to go to Annie, I think she will want her mother even in heaven."

And now may I linger some moments before we start for London to touch the memories of the home we were to leave, and the children; for there may be no place for them afterward. I well remember saying to my dear old father in the faith, Dr. Furness, when they were still weans in the mother's constant care: "Do tell me how you managed to raise your children to such a lovely purpose. Ours are still young and full of life, for which we are glad and thankful; and I should like you to tell me your secret." "It is no secret," he said, "and very simple; we turned those words of Paul the other way about where he says, 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right,' and made them read, 'Parents, obey your children,' and the new version answered to a charm."

But how I fared may perhaps be best told in a story, that will also touch the charm of the little maid who was always so bright and winsome. Her elder sister said to me one day, as we sat all together, "Papa, I wish you would write your sermons on Monday and Tuesday, you are always so cross on Saturdays when you are busy and we make a noise." This was true,



## SOME MEMORIES

---

the lassie was right. And so, after trying to stand from under to no purpose, I gave in and said: "Well, my dear, the new year is close at hand when you know we all begin to make good resolutions, and I will make one, I will try after New Year's — because the holidays are a busy time — to write my sermons earlier in the week though I cannot promise to begin on the Monday."

This pleased the children, you may be sure, and the father too, who has loved to make good resolutions all his life; but the Christmas-tide came, and the new year, in which there is always so much to do, and I was still driven who would drive, so that Friday and Saturday found me busy as ever. Meanwhile my mentor was watching me and biding her time to bring me to book. So one day she said, "Papa, you did not begin writing your sermons early in the week as you said you would, you know, after New Year's; and you were cross again on Saturday when we made some noise." Well, this was true, and I wist not what I should do, when it came to me in a flash that I could shuffle out of the mire on a similitude. So I said — oh, so gently!—"My dear, if you should milk a cow and set the milk to stand in a bowl, what

## SOME MEMORIES

---

would that milk do?" The answer I expected was, it would cream up, and then I would say that is just what sermons have to do. You cannot say on Monday, now I will write a sermon and go to work and get it done by Tuesday night: you have to think it over until, say, Friday it must cream up, as the milk does, you know, in the bowl. This would set me on my feet; but it didn't. My little maid was listening to our conference with great interest, and said suddenly, "I know what that milk would do: it would turn *sour*." She did not point the moral. She was a wise little maid, and reforms go on leaden feet; but I remember no trouble thereafter, and so am fain to believe that the milk did not turn sour, no matter about the days in the week.

May I linger over another memory I love to cherish? We did not talk doctrine to the children in the home week-day or Sunday, and it may be some of you will say, More's the pity. But of this I am not sure, and hereby hangs my tale. Our eldest daughter, a thoughtful lassie, went one Sunday evening to hear Dr. David Swing, the pastor, then, of the Presbyterian church on the North Side, who was afterward tried for heresy by a council in which Dr.

## SOME MEMORIES

---

Patton, the ex-president of Princeton, was the leader.

Dr. Swing's sermon was on predestination, and a very able sermon, no doubt; but my daughter was in a maze about the sermon, and said to me next day, as we sat at the table, after some account of the discourse, "Does predestination mean, father, that you must go where God sends you, to heaven or to hell?" But I think she did not use just these words. Well, I was preparing, no doubt, to answer the lassie when her younger sister, who brought me to book about the Saturday trouble, said: "That is not true, sister. It is not predestination, it is *pedestrianation*. You can go which way you will,"—and took for her proof the man whose name I forget, a famous pedestrian who had walked from Portland in Maine to Chicago of his own free will. So I did not treat them to my discourse or cite Dr. Johnson's brusque dogma,—“Sir, we know we are free, and there's an end on't.”

The children were left in good care, and we made good time, as the time was thirty-four years ago on the steamer to Liverpool; and from Liverpool we made a bee-line for Leeds, for a brief visit to the dear old mother, who was then

## SOME MEMORIES

---

in her seventy-fifth year, and to the kith and kin before we went up to London. (You go *up* to London from all over England, never *down*.) And, when we came home to mother, as we sat about the table, she said, "Children, did you know it was twenty-one years ago this morning since you started on your way to America, the day after your wedding?" We had not remembered, but mother had kept true time: our wedding journey had taken in twenty-one years.

## XXV

The chapel where the opening services were held for the May meeting of our brotherhood in London stood in Essex Street near the Strand, the nearest neighbor to Norfolk Street down which I am apt to daunder when I am in London trying to verify "Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings." The Essex Street Chapel was the first in the city to bear our name Unitarian, which was also then our brand, and was built for the ministry of Theophilus Lindsey, a true given name; for my manual says it means "a friend of God." And, as I am still under the spell of talking to familiar friends rather than to "all outdoors," as I was last winter, I would fain put off sermon time to tell you something about the good Theophilus, and how it came to pass that they built the chapel for him in the city of London.

He was the vicar of Cattarick in the north of England, a wild and large parish with a small stipend, for which he had resigned some rich incumbencies in the south where he could

## SOME MEMORIES

---

live at ease, with a bishop's mitre and apron dangling in the near distance.

But a man was wanted in the great, rambling parish, who, like Bernard Gilpin, would put his whole soul into the work of winning the people from a sort of semi-paganism to God, and, as the event proved, he was the man.

He went to work with his wife, who was the true helpmeet for her husband, to do the work God had given him to do,— fed the hungry and clothed the naked, started schools where they were needed far and wide in the parish, and helped to maintain them out of their small income. He was also a sort of self-appointed doctor, carrying such medicines as he could safely prescribe in the saddle bags with his Bible and prayer-book, because he could not be content with the cure of souls alone, but must do what he could for the cure of bodies also, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

But, in reading his New Testament one day, those words of Paul suddenly arrested him, "There is but one God the Father," and, as he tells us, sank into his heart, so that he must needs ponder them and strive to find the truth, for his soul's sake, of the Trinity or the Unity of God. He was a man of excellent learning

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and of absolute sincerity of purpose, who must play no tricks with his conscience, but must search the Scriptures painfully to find whether this doctrine of the Trinity was the truth taught in his Bible or was only a dogma of his Church. And in his trouble he made a clean breast of it to a friend in orders, eminent in the Church, to find they were entirely of one mind about the dogma; but his friend gave no sign of distress when he read the formulas of the Trinity on a Sunday from the prayer-book. This was another trouble. And then he says: "It seemed to me at last to be a real duplicity that, while I was praying in my heart to the one God our Father, my people were led by my language to pray to three persons. And, as one great design of Christ's teaching and mission was the worship of the Father, as he himself tells us, I could not think it was right to do what I was doing for the simple-hearted people who worshipped God with me."

Then in the midst of the trouble and perplexity he had a severe fit of sickness that brought him face to face, he says, with death. And, as he began to recover, a book fell into his hands which was written by a man who had given up his living, as he himself had thought he must

## SOME MEMORIES

---

do,—a book in which he read these words,—

“When thou canst no longer continue in thy work without dishonor to God, discredit to thy religion, the loss of thine own integrity, the wounding of thy conscience, the spoiling of thy peace, and the risking of thy soul, then thou must believe that God will turn the laying aside of thy work to the advancement of his gospel.” These words also went to his heart, and he made up his mind to resign the living and go forth with the good wife into the world, not knowing as yet where they should go or what he should do.

But, before he left his people, he must meet them face to face and tell them why he could not stay. There were chapels of ease in the great parish for those who lived too far away to attend the mother Church, which dates in some rude fashion from about 627 A. D., when Paulinus, the first missionary from Rome to the northern tribes, “baptized his converts in the river Swale which runs by the village of Catarac,” as Beda tells us. He spoke to them as a father to his children, bidding them farewell; and there was sore weeping when they were aware they should see his face no more.

They had no trouble about the doctrine or



## SOME MEMORIES

---

the dogma of the Trinity or the Unity. This was as strange as if a Hindu should talk to them about the mysteries of the Rig Vedas. But there was one book they could read, and this was the good parson's life through the ten years of his ministry among them. This was as good as fine wheat or freshly kilned oatmeal. So their souls clave unto him, and they pleaded with him to stay. I can hear them across the chasm of the many years, pleading with him in the dear old dialect and crying: "Naay, sir, ye munnut leaave us. Ye mun steeay an' take care on us. We cannut let ye gan aweeay. Whaa, sir, if ye be a Unitarian, as ye saay, so be we. We will be juust what ye tell us. Steeay, sir, that's all we want." This was the plea they made, and, as I read the record their words are still wet to me with the tears; but he could not stay. All the paths his feet had worn as he went about doing good were closed to him now. Only one was open that led into the wilderness. There was about two hundred dollars in our tenor when he had sold his library, and it was borne in on him that he must go to London. So he went forth, his good wife holding his hand, not knowing what would befall him there. The old magazines of the period

## SOME MEMORIES

---

that report the change speak of him with pure regard, the *Gentleman's Magazine* especially (I find no religious magazines in that time). And his bishop, in parting with him, said, "I have lost the best man I had in my whole diocese."

I said just now there was no church in London then that bore our name or brand, though our faith in the unity of God, the great central truth we hold and maintain, was winning its way there as it was in Boston in our Puritan churches and theirs, in the Presbyterian, ministers of the mind of Priestley and Lardner, Rees and Kippis on the other side the water, and like Chauncey and Mayhew on this side; but they did not take the name and were not what we call "come-outers," while my good Theophilus, who had come out alone because alone he had found the truth in his Bible, found he must accept the brand; and if there was but one man to do this, he would be the man. He had bought his freedom with a great price, and it was dear to him as his life — his soul's life — to be just what he was, — a confessor of the grand primal truth, there is but one God the Father. And he could give up his living and what we may call his "caste," but for his soul's sake he must

## SOME MEMORIES

---

be the man he was called to be,—an apostle separated unto the gospel of God.

He hired a hall and began to hold services there. The people came to hear him in such numbers that the place was soon too strait for them, so that they said, "We must build a chapel." And, as many persons of wealth and distinction heard him gladly, this was easily done, while it is good to remember that our Benjamin Franklin helped to build the chapel, attended the services, and subscribed to the minister's stipend while he lived in London. This was the place, I said, where the services were held that morning, in May, 1871. I still remember the pulpit we have branded as "a tub," with the sounding-board over your head. I remember, also, I felt a little crowded in the tub, and imagined Master Lindsey must have been a slim man, such an one, it may be, as Richard Baxter, the eminent Puritan divine, whose pulpit stands now on the floor of the vestry in our church at Kidderminster, into which you passed by a door; but, when I would have fain gone in, so that I might stand where he had stood, I could not get through, and had to climb over. And this, mind you, was not the other day: it was thirty years ago.

## SOME MEMORIES

---

The chapel was full that morning to running over. I think I was the first man from the United States who had been invited to preach the sermon at the annual meeting, but of this I am not sure. And I was not from Boston; for in that case I should have borne the chrism on my forehead. I had come from Chicago, a strange city in those days to Englishmen, but destined in the autumn of that year to be lifted for a spectacle to the world in her monstrous conflagration. She was branded then as "a mud hole," and was very far indeed from the eminence on which she stands to-day,—the eminence that won the admiration of a gentleman from England, who came to the city not long ago to "mark well her bulwarks and consider her palaces," and said, "She beats her own brag." But I notice when I go there that she has grown so great she has ceased to brag.

But now I must tell you about the services in the old mother chapel. When the good Quaker had a passage at arms with one he called a hireling minister, touching the high worth of their usage over ours, he said, "Thee preaches because thee *has* to say something, but we preach because we have something to say." I am not sure that this is always true of their preaching,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and am quite sure the converse is not always true of ours, while I think both came together for me that morning to meet and tie. I had to say something, and had something to say, while, if you ask, Where is boasting, then I would answer, It is excluded by the law of grace. I have told you of times in other memories, when I had not to lift, but was lifted, when the light shone clear for me, and it was as the budding forth of wings. I also was in the spirit on the Lord's day. A dear friend told me many years ago how he met Morse in a company, and said to him, "Are you not proud, sir, of what you have done?" And he answered, "No, I am not proud, because I always feel these things were not done by me, but through me." So I have felt, and still feel, when I remember that morning. I was in the spirit, mid-week as it was. The sermon is still in the barrel, and, as the Scotch say, "is no that bad" when I take it out now and then; but the fervent fire is no more in the words, as it was that morning, and I have to remember what Mr. Emerson said to me after a service in Chicago, "When you are old, you will wonder how these things were done." The good poet sings,—

## SOME MEMORIES

---

“The tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.”

But the tender grace of that day comes back to me always as I sit in the silence and touch the memories,—this, and how they spoke to me after the service and clasped my hand. They are by no means so clever in this wise in England as we are on this side the water; they need to be thawed out, and I may say, in passing, especially in Scotland. But there was no ice that morning or down to zero, in the good old chapel, and I felt I was at home in London, and in England also; for from that day, as it seems to me, all the churches of our faith and order gave me the freedom of their pulpit. For, in the five visits I have made since then to the old motherland, I cannot remember one Sunday when I was not preaching somewhere, while on my last visit, almost seven years ago, the council invited me again to take the annual sermon; but I was then on the Continent, and could not come to time, and felt I must decline the invitation.

In another memory I may tell you about our rambles about London and otherwheres, but, before this closes, may say I preached that summer

## SOME MEMORIES

---

for Dr. Martineau's congregation in the chapel, of which he was then the minister. In Manchester, also, at the Cross Street Chapel, for Mr. Gaskell, the husband of Mrs. Gaskell, the author, you will know, of "Ruth" and "Mary Barton" and "Cranford," to mention only her best works to my own thinking. He was a lovely man, with a touch of latent humor. I was chatting with him one day in the vestry of the chapel, and speaking of a former minister who had won my regard. I said, "Do you know, sir, where he is buried?" And he answered, "Yes, you are sitting right on his grave." I moved my chair. And for Charles Beard in Liverpool, the son of the famous old doctor in divinity, preacher and teacher. Mr. Beard had written me to preach for him, and I had told him when we should be due in Liverpool. We went, on landing, to the Adelphi; and, as I was inscribing our names, he stood near, and holding out his hand, as I turned, he said, "I am Mr. Beard." His hair was white. I took him for the old doctor, and said presently, "How is your son, sir?" And he answered promptly, "I am my son." And so we clasped hands.

## XXVI

In my last memory I told you the story of our good Theophilus, "a friend of God," and the services in the old chapel, when I stood in the same pulpit, both good memories still, with no rust on them or tarnish from the touch of time.

And now I want to tell you about our stay in London through some three weeks among the friends of our faith and fellowship, who gave me and mine the warm welcome on that memorable morning. We were the guests mainly of Rev. Robert Spears and Mrs. Spears, his good and true helpmeet. He was then the secretary of the Association, and also the minister of the Stamford Street Chapel. Brother Hale had given me a letter to him on my visit to England six years before this, when he gave me as warm welcome as my heart could desire, and asked me also to preach for him on the Sunday evening, and there to my delight I found a congregation very much like my own in Chicago. They received the Word gladly,



## SOME MEMORIES

---

and clasped my hand so heartily after the service that, as an old friend used to say, it seemed like the hand of Providence, as indeed I think it was to me. And Robert I soon found was a man to tie to and to love, sincere as the day and wholesome as brown bread. We also found presently that our lives in the earlier years had lain on parallel lines; for he also had worked at the anvil and spent all his spare time in reading and study, had joined an offshoot of my mother Methodist Church, and became a local preacher, but found he was not in sympathy with the doctrines or dogmas of the church, so he gave up his fellowship and found his true home in the Unitarian fold, and in our faith the bread of life to his soul. You will find the story of his life in a small volume you can purchase at the rooms of our Association in Boston, for which I wrote a brief sketch. It is the story of the most successful minister of our faith and order, to my own mind, in London, from his coming there to his death. He also, with his good wife, kept what we were used to call over here a minister's tavern; for they were given to hospitality, as Dr. Ripley was in Concord, where Mr. Emerson says every minister's horse from the eastward turned in by in-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

stinct at the gateway of the "Old Manse" Hawthorne has lifted into the light for a time we cannot measure. So Robert and the good hostess welcomed the strangers within their gates, who came to London with a message or a burden, seeking the light, or bringing it, as they thought, to our people from Hindustan or Iceland. This was no matter: they were strangers, and they took them in.

Other friends I must mention, who made our stay in the great city most pleasant and memorable. I noticed, as I was speaking that morning, a man sitting near the pulpit with a grand head and snow-white hair, looking up intently through a pair of quite formidable spectacles he would throw back on his forehead with a quick motion when something was said it may be he liked or disliked, I had no time or will to guess. But, when I came down literally from on high, he came forward, clasped my hand warmly, and mentioned his name, John Bowring. It was the good knight Sir John, and I bowed my head in reverence, not to the knight, but to the man; for he was known to me through my reading and by common fame.

He was then in his seventy-ninth year, but was hale and hearty to all seeming as a man of

## SOME MEMORIES

---

fifty; and, as I found, when he would speak in our meetings and to myself in his home, he was one with us and one of us, heart and soul. He had no misgivings touching our faith or our future. We were here to stay and to win the world to the gospel of the One God our Father, and there were moments in our communion when his voice would take a deep tone and musical, as if he were chanting his own grand hymn,—

“Watchman, tell us of the night,  
What its signs of promise are?”

And now I love to think it was almost worth the journey over sea to spend those hours with the good knight; and, when he asked me, as we sat at the table, whether I had seen any of the eminent people since we came to London, I answered, “No one greater than a knight,” not remembering at the moment he was one.

Sir John Robinson was in the old chapel also that morning, then plain John. He was then the chief on the *Daily News*. He also clasped my hand warmly and wrote something about the services to the *Chicago Evening Journal*, which greatly pleased my people and — let me be honest — pleased me when we came home. He would have me go with him on a day to the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

Reform Club to break bread; and in the great common room I sat in Thackeray's favorite chair, that also is a pleasant memory. Our friendship only ended with his life. We were sure to meet when I came to London in the after years and sit together at the table in the club; and I loved to meet him, he was so heartily human. And I think he was the best story-teller I ever met in England, drawn from the memories of his busy life as they usually were. Also like the whole brood of us, he would take possession of any story worth its salt and hold it in fee simple. I told him such an one, when we met as usual in 1892, of a man in the West touched with a quaint and original humor that pleased him greatly, as I had it fresh from the mint; and, not long after we came home, there it was in *Punch* in a very thin disguise, but transferred to England with a capital illustration. I went over again in 1898. He came to see me, and we went to the club, where slipping into the old groove, he had told some good stories of the men he had met, and I had drawn also on my memory, I said, "Sir John, did you give that story I told you about the old humorist in Illinois to *Punch*?" He did not blush: we never do in such a case. He said simply, "It

## SOME MEMORIES

---

was too good to keep, you know," and then added with a touch of alarm, "Do not follow my example and print any of those I have told you, I am making a book of recollections." The book I notice is printed, but he did not live to see it in print, and I shall see his face no more; but I love to hold the memory of our friendship through more than thirty years.

Another, and the last, of our sojourn may close this monologue for the time, of the friendship which dates from that year and still stays warm and sweet with those who are left, of Sir James Clarke Lawrence and his brothers which must have budded forth that morning. Sir James was at the head then, and if my memory is good, in the firm of Lawrence Brothers, Contractors and Builders.

Their father had come up to London many years before, a workingman, with just his able head, his clever hands, and the good wife for his whole fortune — and what better could you wish for — had established his business on firm foundations, and prospered amain by honest work well done; had also given such pledges of his worth as a man and a citizen that he was elected lord mayor of his city I think for two terms, but of this I am not quite sure; and had

## SOME MEMORIES

---

also been knighted. The sons had succeeded him in the business at his death, and Sir James had been elected lord mayor in the year before this we have in our minds, and had been knighted in the opening of the great Holborn Viaduct.

He was a busy man, but offered heartily to go with me about London — *his* London — and show me what I might not easily see otherwise. This was just what I would love to do. I had wanted to see the guild halls of the ancient guilds about which I had read so much, and his name was the pass-key to open their curious and capital treasures. Then he took me to the great guild hall of the city he knew like a book, having been lord mayor, and among many things asked the guardian to open the plate chest and show me the plate, all gold, to lift out the great golden flagon he put into my hand, and asked me to heft it, and did *not* ask me if we had anything like that in the States. We went to Newgate, that place of evil fame, a hideous old structure now pulled down, but black then with smoke and to me with its records of crime, to the Holloway Prison also, where there was a treadmill. There was one in my boyhood at Wakefield in Yorkshire, the buga-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

boo of boys when they would say of some reckless fellow he will land on the treadmill; and I wanted to verify my grim memory. So I said to my friend, "I should like to get on that thing, sir, and see how it works." He smiled, and the man who was ordered off seemed much pleased to have me take his place; but I wonder if it was more than a fragment of a minute before I cried, "Let me down!" It seemed as if the very world was giving way under my feet. I can dimly recall that moment still.

But better memories wait. Sir James said he would like me on a day to attend the great service held once a year in St. Paul's Cathedral for the children of the great London charities. I was glad to go, and have been glad for the memory all these years. We sat, I remember, in the wardens' pew right under the dome. The children — ten thousand they told me — sat in the vast gallery to the left, and the congregation, also vast, in the body of the cathedral, I forget its especial name. The services were intoned in beautiful harmony, lead by one wonderful voice. I would love to hear that voice again. There were other things done by the choir in the proper order, and, when the right moment came, all the children rose and sang a



## SOME MEMORIES

---

hymn to such a heart-invading purpose that the tears ran down my face.

Then one evening I must go with my good friend to the feast of the Carpenters' Guild in their splendid hall — my last memory of our sojourn in London that spring. I had seen the hall before in his company, but here were the members of the guild on one of their holidays, cheerful and ready for the good cheer. I was introduced to the oldest earl in England by strict descent, who gave me two fingers to shake, and was told that they came over with the Conqueror, but have still to find out what they had done besides. It was one of those dinners I suppose you can only partake of in the old London guilds — “a feast of fat things, . . . and wines on the lees well refined”; but all things were done decently and in order. There was a bishop on the dais to ask the blessing, and a toastmaster who was not a guest, but came in at intervals to propose the toast and then sing a song, as the custom had been observed for hundreds of years, — a person worthy the pen of Dickens. And, when the feast was over and done — but, as I guessed, not done with by some who sat near us — there were speeches to the honor and glory of the fine old craft.



## SOME MEMORIES

---

The first speech was made by the bishop, a fine old dignitary of the first water; for there are degrees in bishops, as I learned in Canterbury when I was the guest of Canon Freeman-tle. I sat next a bishop, and said to him — for we were in a merry mood — I felt a little proud, for I had never dined with one of his rank before. “Do not be proud,” he said, laughing in his sleeve. “They have made a lot suffragan bishops, and I am one. But I think we are not held in any great esteem; for I went not long ago to a place in my charge to preach and confirm, where I was not known, and overheard one old farmer say to another, ‘T’ bishop’s coming to preach, did ye know?’ ‘Ay, I know,’ the other answered, ‘but he’s only o’ of them *sufferin’* bishops.’ Do not be proud.” So the bishop, I said, made the first speech, and he was followed by a fine old orthodox divine, the minister of an eminent church in Manchester. He was to be the last speaker that evening; but, when he sat down, the president said, “We have a gentleman with us, a minister from America; and we shall be pleased if he will say a word to us before we go home.” Sir James whispered, “You are the man.” And I was of course quite unprepared to say even the word. But the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

word came to me in a flash, it was given me what I should say. So, after due praise of the good addresses to which we had listened — we always do that, you know, in any case, but here I could speak with a good will — I said: “There is one word more can be said of your honorable craft, which to my own mind casts the fairest radiance on you and yours. Jesus Christ was a carpenter, and wrought at the bench, as nearly as we can make out, until he was about thirty years of age, before he went forth on his holy mission.” I cannot remember what I said besides in the few moments, but had reason to believe it was a welcome word; for the good orthodox divine clasped my hand as we left the hall, saying, “Why should I have forgotten to say that word myself?” I thought I knew the reason, but did not tell him.

## XXVII

Our sojourn in England that summer and a journey on the continent from Antwerp through the Rhineland to Switzerland and thence by Geneva to Paris are memories I may touch before I have done if the play seems to be worth the candle, but will only say now that we came home in September to find a warm welcome all along the line.

We were purely well, the father, the mother, and the little maid, and no member of the church had been taken from our midst. They were all there to welcome us in the church, the Sunday-school, and at the week-night reception.

We came home on the Batavia, and they had a model of her made, studded all over with tuberoses and set on the communion table. Their fragrance still lingers in my memory as I write these words, and in my heart. This would be the third week in September when we held the first services in our church, and sang, as I still remember, the hymn which was written for the dedication of our church:—

## SOME MEMORIES

---

“Unto thy temple, Lord, we come,  
With thankful hearts to worship thee;  
And pray that this may be our home,  
Until we touch eternity.”

This was our psalm and prayer, our hope and joy; and we wist not that the day of mourning and desolation was drawing near when the words of the ancient Hebrew prophet would again be fulfilled.

“Saith God, I will shew wonders in the heavens  
above,  
And signs on the earth beneath,  
Blood and fire, vapor and smoke.  
The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood.”

When on the third Sunday of our services and in the evening, as I was telling the story to a great congregation of the wreck and ruin we had seen in Paris, and of what we had been told by friends who had survived the siege and the great woe of the Commune, never leaving the city for a day, the fire was kindled by a mere accident, as the story stands, that lifted our fair city in the lurid flame for a spectacle to the world. And on the Monday night, when I saw the last home burn, far up in the north, the fire

## SOME MEMORIES

---

had swept over a space four miles in length and from a mile to a mile and a half in breadth between the river and the lake, leaving over ninety-eight thousand men, women, and children homeless when the night fell, and on a rough estimate more than seventy thousand crouching outside the fire line in the open and in the bitter October storm.

Still the fire did not fall on us like a bolt from the blue. The summer had been the driest the oldest settlers could remember, and some of these had lived there with the Indians when Chicago was a trading-post. The rainfall by the record had been only twenty-eight and a half per cent. of the usual average, and the drought had covered the whole region northward, so that very soon after we came home the woods and dry bent were afire in the lumber lands, from which a heavy haze of smoke, as I remember, hung over our city from the far away, and the sad tidings came to us of small lumber towns burning, the loss of many lives, and of many more who were only saved by standing up to their necks in the water. This was the situation, and many took the alarm, fearing what might come to pass in our tinder-dry city in which the houses were mostly built

## SOME MEMORIES

---

of wood, especially on the North and West Sides. So the authorities and the fire department were taking all the pains possible, I think, to fight the fire if it should kindle and spread, while in the week before the great conflagration there was a fire on the West Side where a large area was burned; but this was got under after a fierce struggle, and then we began to hope for the best, while the worst was at our doors. The alarm also had spread that the worst might still be waiting; for Dr. Eliot, our minister in St. Louis, told me he was greatly alarmed, and on the Sunday morning said to his people he feared a great calamity was impending over us, and told them they must all be ready to help us by all means in their power when it came.

It came, I said, on the Sunday evening; and I well remember when the church scaled the glare of fire that met us far away, as it seemed then, on the South Side, and we were alarmed. But I was tired with the heat and the two services, and said I must have some sleep. Mother was tired also, but could not — durst not — rest. She would watch, and, if there was danger that the fire would cross the river and spread north, she would wake me. She aroused

## SOME MEMORIES

---

me soon after midnight. The fire was burning fiercely, she said, and we must be ready if it crossed the river. The wind was blowing hard from the south-west, and the burning embers were borne high above us as yet on its wings. If you can imagine a snowstorm of burning embers — for I can find no fitter figure — there it was high in the dark heavens. We must arouse the children at once, she said, and have them dressed. So this was done, and then we aroused the neighbors down the avenue, and asked the policeman to alarm all he could reach who were still sleeping. He did not think the fire would reach us, but went to work with a will. This so far was more mother's work than mine. I thought the fire might still be mastered before it crossed the river. The children, I remember, were very quiet and asked me to take them over the river to see the spectacle. Mother was not willing, but I took them over the bridge. The court-house was burning and the fire gathering in volume, and I saw we must make haste home, for the bridge was in peril. Half an hour or so after this the bridge was burned, the wind had risen to a hurricane, and volumes of flame began to rise from the great stores of alcohol and its like in the warehouses, and go northward

## SOME MEMORIES

---

on the storm. The spire of the Catholic Cathedral came down before the fire came near. I have seen this questioned; but I saw it fall, as I stood not far away. Early in the morning the fire had crossed the river. John Wentworth, ex-mayor I know not how many times, and a potency in our city, came pounding up the street with a carpet bag, going north. We were good friends, and he said to me: "The fire will take the whole North Side. Get your family away. It has burnt all I have except the papers in this carpet bag." And then he went his way, and I saw him no more for many months. But we could not flee then, and made up our minds to save what we could from the home if it was burned, and take refuge in the church; for that might still be saved. It was a forlorn hope; but we began at once to move what we could take in our arms, with the children to help us. So down to our little lad they all volunteered. I remember still how we hung a picture we would save, a landscape, by William Hart. We looped it over his neck, and away he went. But the loop was long, the picture hung before him and bumped on his small shins, whereat he wept a few quiet tears; but he got there, for he takes after his mother.



## SOME MEMORIES

---

But the pathetic picture of his trotting along is worth more to me now than the landscape by Hart. We all worked like beavers to save what we could, and a good woman came, saying: "The fire will not take our house, the wind is blowing it away. If you want to save your most valuable books, send them to us." We had saved a few: our eldest daughter had carried them in her arms, going back and forth, so that the bonnie face of my lassie was all grimy, while the smoke had brought the tears down her face and made cleaner lines. And in one of her journeys, with her arms full of books, as she still tells the story, a young gentleman, an utter stranger, said to her, "Miss Collyer, may I wipe your face?" She answered, "If you please, sir." So he did this, with a handkerchief which she thinks must have been used for many such faces that morning. So she said, "Thank you, sir." She had never seen him before and never saw him again, the good Samaritan! Well, I found an express to take my most precious books. I do not remember what I paid him, but it was all the money I had about me. The books were taken in, and I felt that a load was taken from my heart; but within an hour the fire leapt on the house, and my books

## SOME MEMORIES

---

were a burnt offering to the monster. We kept well at work, saving what we could carry, until the front of the home was on fire; but still I lingered after mother and children had taken refuge in the church, picking up trifles worth but little except to me and mine, and then I must clear out by the rear door, but still remember, as I was passing, I saw the kettle standing on the stove, as the maids had left it ready for our breakfast. The sight went to my heart. Something human seemed to touch the thing we had used so long. I paused for a moment to pat it on the shoulder, and said: "I am sorry, old friend, that I must leave you there to burn. You have been a good servant to me and mine; and, quite unlike your master, you always began to sing before you boiled over." So near is humor of kin to our pain.

But the fire still swept northward, and well along in the forenoon we saw the church must go. A house near by on the line of the wind had caught, and our house of refuge was in instant peril. One house in the great waste of burning was saved, the Ogden house. It stood in a square quite near the church, and the good, generous inmates came over to us, and said: "We have a great cistern full of water. Come over

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and take all you will to save the church. We may also be burned out, but we don't care. Come for the water and welcome." But, in despite of all we could do, the fire swept through the slats in the spire, and the church began to burn up there. Then, when there was no hope, we took again what we could carry, of the most value, and started on our pilgrimage from the City of Destruction, buried our small store of silver in a celery patch not far away, and heaped the earth over it with our hands and feet. Mother remembered that we moved five times that day, all told, with what we could carry, losing the most before the night fell; but, when we left the church, I was blind and helpless. I could not open my eyes or my hands. So they had to lead me northward out of the danger. There was one house, we were sure, away up north, the fire would not reach. The family were members of our church. We would go there, and we went. If we had been their ain folk, we could not have been more welcome than Mrs. Price made us, and her sons. They were originally from Brattleboro. The town takes on a touch of sacredness to me because of the memory. I was lamed, and they ministered unto me: we were faint, and they fed us. My

## SOME MEMORIES

---

eyes opened after much bathing, and my hands with the rest and refreshing, so that I was myself again as they were, the mother and the children. When I went to look out, I said, "The fire will take your house, dear friends." And so it was, but there was time to bury many things in the garden in the dry sand they recovered without damage about a week after. Some members of our church lived north by west in the lee of a small lake and were safe from the fire. Mr. Moulding said, "We must find our minister and the family at any cost." So he yoked up his team and came to find us — found us I do not quite remember where; but there the good fellow was with his wagon, ready to take us home. Mother and the children went with him, but I stayed behind to come after, while among us we picked up fifteen young men of the church, I remember, who were quite stranded. They were also taken to the refuge in the lee of the lake. There was no room for them in the house, so they must sleep in the barn,— a palace to them that night, but very cold, as they would tell for years after in great glee. They slept in a row; and, when the outermost men could bear the cold no longer, they would take to the middle where the others gave

## SOME MEMORIES

---

them room. So they had a good time. My last memory of the grim day was to watch the fire fiend burn the last house.

This is the memory of the destruction of our home, our church, and almost all the homes in our parish. Another memory remains of our restoration.

## XXVIII

I must reap some memories now of our restoration after the great fire, and this is the first.

When we were alone in our safe harbor on the lee of the small lake, and mother had seen the children safe in their beds, I quite broke down, for the pity of it and the pain. The church was burnt, and the home we owned, with more than 90 per cent of the homes in our parish, while we feared also that dear friends had been caught as in a trap when the great volumes of fire from the explosions in the vaults on the south side had leaped suddenly on them and barred their escape by the avenues northward. They might have escaped in a boat or a tug on the lake; but we feared the worst, and I broke down.

But once more in our life together my extremity was mother's opportunity. Bunyan tells us that, when his pilgrims were in the dungeon of the Giant Despair, Christian found a key in his bosom called Hope, wherewith they

## SOME MEMORIES

---

opened the door of the dungeon and were free. I had no such key that black midnight, but mother found one in *her* bosom, and set me free. I cannot recall her words, but this was their burden, "Sorrow may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning." She was sure we had seen the worst, and now the best was waiting. So I began to hope for the better and the best; and in the morning I was ready with her help and the help of God to face the grim day and the instant demand.

My first-born son was not with us in the fire: he was in the country on a visit to some friends, but hurried home and found us early in the morning, eager to help us. But he was also in great trouble, poor lad! He was to have been married on the Tuesday or the Wednesday evening—I do not quite remember—in the church. There was no church now; but the far sorer trouble was his bride had vanished in the smoke and flame with her family, and he could hear no word of what had become of them. They had escaped by the lake when the fire hemmed them in; and this was his joy and ours, you may be sure. Still he was heavy of heart, as we were for him, that there could be no wedding. He had taken a cottage just outside the

## SOME MEMORIES

---

waste of burning, as we found, and was in good work when business could start up again. So I said to him, he must be married all the same forthwith. We were not going to break down, but to build up again, and would stand shoulder to shoulder. So he must be ready to be married the next day, and go right away, after he had seen his sweetheart, to hunt up the man who would issue the license. I remember also how eagerly he fell in with the plan and made good the Scripture, "Children, obey your parents, for this is right," found his man, whose forms were all burnt; but he drew up the license on a sheet of paper, and they were married on time.

We must also have a wedding feast of course, in despite of the fire, which had devoured what had been prepared; and we had the feast. Some good friends, who had not been burnt out, sent in what they could muster, and I went out my lone to find some small luxury that would crown the feast. It was a forlorn errand; for all the money I had in the world was some very small change, all the rest had been given to the expressman who moved my books, that were burned after all. Well, I saw the luxury in the window of a small store. It was a string of sausage, and I asked what they were per pound.



## SOME MEMORIES

---

I had just enough money for a pound, so I gave my order; but the string weighed half a pound over my stint, and I told the nice, civil woman the pound was all I could pay for. Would she cut off the margin? She looked up and asked me if this was not — myself? “Yes,” I said. And then she asked me if I remembered helping a poor family on Market Street on a time, but the memory had gone. Then she said: “You have forgotten, sir; but I have not. I will not cut the string. Take them all, and welcome.” I think there are times when it is more generous to accept a gift than to give one. It would have been a mean thing in me to say no to that woman. So I accepted the half pound with courtesy, and the sausage crowned the feast. Also it was very good.

Then we must find a place for ourselves and the children. The good friends who had taken us in were straitened for room, mother said, and must not be burdened more than we could help, glad as they were to have us with them. We did not know where to turn in the great confusion. The problem was a hard one to solve; but it was soon solved for us by my dear friend of many years, Charles W. Wendte, now the minister of the Parker Fraternity in Boston,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

but then the minister of our Third Church in Chicago, far away on the South Side of the city. He came through the burning waste of the four miles with a team, and found us. I could not have done it; but there he was, delighted to find us, and take us to his own home, where his good mother was waiting to welcome us and care for us so long as we would stay. So we went with him gladly, and there was the welcome until we found a place to board with other friends through the impending winter.

We were poor as Job's turkey, as my mother used to say. We had money in the bank, and all the banks were burned. But the morning after the wedding feast I found our good Deacon Mears — or he found me — and, finding I was stranded, emptied all his pockets one by one into my hands, so that mother was able to make me look decent, as she said; for I was what we were used to call "a hobject" in our folk speech in fighting the fire. Then the memory steals out of my anxiety about our harried and scattered flock. I wanted to find them, to help them if I was able, and to see what we could do who were still the unburned church. This was my burden, and it was lifted. The

## SOME MEMORIES

---

light shone for me that had never failed in the most momentous moments of my life, as I have told you before, and my way was made clear. I must give notice in the papers, when they began to print them again, that I would meet my people on the space before our church on the Sunday morning at eleven, where we would hold a religious service. I found my friend Horace White, the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, hard at work preparing the first imprint after the fire, as he told me the other day; and he was glad to insert my notice, while the result was beyond my hope when we came together,—a large company of our people, with other friends and many strangers, on the space before the church. A great stone had fallen in just the right place for my platform, and I had borrowed a Bible and a hymn-book, no doubt, from Brother Wendte. The congregation had no hymn-books. So I fell back on our custom in the small chapel on the hill, when I was a boy, and deaconed out the hymns two lines at a time, as my father had done before me.

Some members of our choir were there who led the singing. There could be but one hymn to open the services:—

## SOME MEMORIES

---

“ Before Jehovah’s awful throne  
Ye nations bow with sacred joy.  
Know that the Lord is God alone;  
He can create, and he destroy.”

I can hear them still singing the great hymn to the solemn Old Hundred. The dear familiar faces also come to me out of the mist, some bent down and some looking up to heaven, while the tears ran down their faces. I can never forget those moments.

Then I must read the lesson for the morning, and this touches a curious coincidence in our human story. In 1829, when I was a small boy, the cathedral in York was set on fire and sorely burned by a fanatic, as he claimed by the command of his God. It is the finest cathedral in England, as Yorkshire men believed and believe still,—so wonderful in its beauty that, when a stern, dissenting minister in Leeds would fain go to see it many years ago, his son told me how his father stood within the fane silent for some time, and then, lifting his hand, said, in almost a whisper, “ This might have been done by the angels.”

Some time after the fire my father bought a small chap-book from a pedler that contained the story of the fire. It was a wonder-book to

## SOME MEMORIES

---

me when I was able to read it, so that I devoured every word; and, when I wanted to find a lesson for the morning, the memory stirred of the coincidence, that on the Sunday after the cathedral was burned the lesson appointed for that morning in the prayer-book, in the time, I think, of Edward VI., was the sixty-fourth chapter in Isaiah, in which you find these words, "Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste."

When I came to the words, I had to stop, but began again and finished the chapter. A prayer came after the lesson, and then we sang the beautiful strain from Ivanhoe:—

"When Israel of the Lord beloved  
Out of the land of bondage came,  
Her father's God before her moved,  
An awful guide in smoke and flame."

After the hymn I said the words that were in my heart for consolation and courage, finding both for myself as I said them, close of kin as they were to the key mother found for me that night. Then I spoke about the situation, and I told them they must pay me no stipend for the year to come. I could take care of my family,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and this I would do. Could go back to the anvil at a pinch and make horseshoes, whereat they smiled, and so did I. When I was through with the address, William Clarke, the brother of our noble preacher James Freeman Clarke, offered the resolution that we would go right on and rebuild our church as soon as we were able. The resolution was passed with something like a shout of gladness, and then we closed our services with the doxology and the benediction, and went wherever we had found a shelter. I may say now, in perfect sincerity, that my sole purpose that day was to do what we had done, and was quite content. I found no one was missing in our flock or had broken down, so far as we could hear from them, while I may say, before I close this memory, that one life was saved, of a young lady in our church who was wearing away before the fire came, so that there was scant hope of her recovery. I went to see her about a week before, and hardly expected to see her again. Her family were unable to escape by one of the avenues or by the lake, but got away to the lake shore, where they laid the dear daughter down on the sands, and were obliged to pour water on her garments to prevent their burning from the falling em-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

bers; and to our great wonder we heard she was recovering. She got quite well, married, and had a fine family of children.

I said just now, my one purpose in calling our people together was to do what was done that morning; but this was not all. Reporters were there, who telegraphed what was said and done far and wide. In the week before the meeting a telegram found me from a young man in Michigan, who said: "I have sent you fourteen hundred loaves of bread. What shall I send next?" The bread was turned over to the Aid and Relief Association, which was already up to the eyes in feeding the hungry multitudes that flocked to their doors. And other messages had come that assured us the great, generous heart of our own people was beating for us and ours, and we should not be left stranded. Then within a week after our meeting a letter reached me from a gentleman in Boston, of which this was the substance: Do not be troubled about your stipend for the coming year. I will pay it, and enclose my check for the first quarter. My stipend was five thousand dollars.

And here I will anticipate this time by, say, a month, to tell you about another letter from the Cornell University, informing me of a thou-

## SOME MEMORIES

---

sand dollars held there for my acceptance if I would make a horseshoe and send it out to the writer. I had not made one since I left the old forge in England twenty-one years before, and so I felt a little dubious about my ability to make one now — I mean, of course, then. But a favorite saying of my old mother, when she could not quite see her way in some home adventure, was “Nothing venture, nothing have.” So I made up my mind to try. My old friend the blacksmith, in the wide lot near our church, had got his forge going, or “agait,” as we used to say. So I went over and showed him the letter, and asked him to lend me his anvil and his helper. This he was heartily glad to do; for, if I won the prize, here was a story to tell as long as he lived. The horseshoe was made, and, though I say it, was well made, and won the old man’s approval. The convolution somewhere in the back of my brain had preserved the tradition and directed every turn of my wrist until the job was done. My name was stamped on the shoe as the maker. Then I went to a notary, who made out the proper document, signed and sealed, sent out with the horseshoe, and drew the thousand dollars with fifty to boot.



## XXIX

I told in my last memory how the morning broke for us after the night of fear, when the first telegram came from the young man who sent the fourteen hundred loaves of bread, and then the letter about our living through the first year which set me free to do whatever lay in my power for my own people and wherever I could lend a hand. It broke on our wasted city also in a mighty pulse of sympathy and succor before the cry went forth for help. The cry came from our own people all over the land and from the nations of kin to us in the old world, What can we do for you? While they did not wait for our answer, but sent the help in a vast abundance to meet the instant demands, so that, when the books were made up, my authority says, in 1876, the contributions from our own people and from abroad amounted to almost five million dollars in money, besides the vast bounty in food and clothing and whatever besides would be of instant use or worth.

But of this bounty I can only make a mere

## SOME MEMORIES

---

mention now, and there is no need for more. So I will touch the memories so good to me still of what was done for me and mine by those of our own faith, mainly here and in England, to restore our church and our last home. It must have been in the week after the fire — say, ten days — that a telegram came from London sent by Sir James Clarke Lawrence, who went with me about his London in May, saying, “Draw on us for five hundred pounds for your family.” And this I remember we set aside as a sort of nest-egg for the home when we could begin to build. Then great consignments of provision and clothing came to my care from friends, known and unknown, we turned over to the association where the bread had gone. Mother remembered sixty-five great cases of this sort we sent there, I think, in one week. Money came also I must use as seemed best, wherewith I was able to help a good number quietly, who could not and must not apply to the Aid and Relief Association. This is still a dear, good memory you may be sure. Meanwhile money came to help rebuild the church, and invitations from St. Louis, New York, and Boston, asking me to come and tell them the story of the fire. This I was glad to do and told my story in our

## SOME MEMORIES

---

church in St. Louis, our Church of the Messiah in New York, and the Music Hall in Boston. And in Boston the generous gentleman who was paying my stipend invited a number of friends to meet me at his house for conference touching the restoration of the church. The result in Boston was the Unitarian Association, with Mr. Shippen the secretary, took charge of the subscriptions there and of those sent in from many of our churches in New England, to such a grand purpose that, if my memory is good, the Association held seventy thousand dollars all told to help us rebuild, while other sums came directly to my hand for the same purpose. My dear friend of forty years also, William H. Baldwin, president of the Young Men's Christian Union, was busy as a whole hive of bees in June, helping in every way he could imagine. Then in good time our churches in England took a hand in the work, the men and women and children in the churches and the Sunday-schools all over the motherland, as they did here in our own land, sending their offerings with letters of heart-whole sympathy for me and mine in the home and the parish, as good or better than their gifts, good as these were. Now and then a letter would come that made me smile. One

## SOME MEMORIES

---

I still remember from a man in Michigan, who said he understood I could write a first-rate lecture, but my delivery was bad. I had no eloquence or elocution: he had both, but could not write a lecture. So he would make me a proposition. If I would write the lecture, he would go round and deliver it, and I should have half the profits. I did not answer that letter. Another contained a quarter of a dollar, with the request that I would send the giver a relic from the fire. I think I returned the quarter less two cents for the stamp, and "sassed" him. One made my eyes dim for a moment. The writer told me she was a hired girl and a Catholic. She had read about the services before the burned church and wanted to help us. Would I accept the dollar she enclosed? and she wished she could spare more. It was a rude hand, and the words were rudely spelled; but I think an illuminated missal could not have touched me as those words touched me or brought the mist of tears. Meanwhile a small band did not neglect the gathering of ourselves together when Sunday came, but soon began to meet for worship in a house beyond the fire line, where I spoke the words that came to me for my own help and theirs. After some

## SOME MEMORIES

---

time also the orthodox church on the next corner from ours ran up a frame building in the rear of their ruin, in which they held services on the Sunday morning and evening, and made us warmly welcome to hold ours there in the afternoon. I think we should have felt shy about asking them, but there was no need. They asked us, and meant it, with no fear that the place would be tainted by our heresy, the good, generous folk who were of our kith and kin after all. Then the time came when we said we must begin to rebuild, about a year after the fire; and the committee that had built before took the work in hand, for they were all there and all ready, and the money was there to foot the bills, enough, if I remember, and it might be something over, so great was the bounty of those whose hearts were moved to help us. We could not restore our church in the splendor we remembered, and this was not our dream. The walls for some space were not ruined, or the towers; and our good architect, the best master-builder to my mind in our city, who had done the work as his free gift before, was ready, busy man as he was, to do it again on the same old terms. He saw to the walls that they should be well restored and strong as

## SOME MEMORIES

---

ever; and all things were restored, simple now, but good to the last piece of woodwork and of stone. The first floor was done first, where we gathered for the services and the Sunday-school as soon as they were ready; and how glad we were to be there I cannot tell you! Meanwhile our home was still a ruin I would glance at now and then with a sore heart, but hopeful; for we had drawn every dollar of our insurance, to our wonder, and began to see our way to a new home, but not on the old lot. So that was sold at a good price, and another bought quite to mother's mind and so to mine; and we also began to build, but found after a while we were not able to finish it save by a heavy mortgage, but from this we were saved. I had lectured now and then in several winters through the Redpath Bureau in Boston, to my great satisfaction and profit, but had not thought of doing this again until after the church was dedicated and all things were in order; but now in the strait about the house the bureau offered me work in this kind through a whole winter, if I could take it at prices I had never commanded. So I told my people how we stood. The work would pay for the home if I would take it in about six months;

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and, if they would give me my time, my stipend they had then begun to pay should be used for the supply of the pulpit, and would command the best men they could lay their hands on. So they voted me my vacation, and I went into the work with all good will from early in November, 1872, to well on in May, 1873, lecturing from Belfast in Maine to far away in Minnesota, and do not remember missing an appointment, nor did those who came to hear me seem to notice my poverty in elocution and the like. I would preach also on the Sunday now and then, and came out at the end of all my labor safe and sound, with money to pay for the new home far more ample than the one we had lost, into which we moved when it was ready and lived in great content.

Meanwhile the church was moving on toward its restoration with no break or trouble; and, when it was ready for the dedication, my dear father in our faith, Dr. Furness of Philadelphia, came out to preach the sermon and give us his benediction, being then seventy years of age. It was a beautiful service, as you will know who remember him, the last of the apostles, as I would think when I heard him who “had *seen* Jesus.” We were at home again in our church,

## SOME MEMORIES

---

and it was good to be there. We had wept over the destruction, and we read in the book of Ezra how some wept over the restoration of the temple after the great captivity who remembered the glory of the former house; but I think there was no weeping over the glory we remembered that Sunday morning. My heart had been moved to attempt a hymn for the dedication of the grand temple that had gone, the hymn we sang when we met for our first service on our return home, as I told you; and, when the time drew near for this dedication, I was moved to attempt another I will transcribe from my memory:—

O Lord our God, when storm and flame  
Hurled homes and temples into dust,  
We gathered here to bless thy name,  
And on our ruin wrote our trust.

Thy tender pity met our pain;  
Swift through the world thine angels ran;  
And then thy Christ appeared again,  
Incarnate, in the heart of man.

Thy lightning lent its burning wing  
To bear the tear-blent sympathy,  
And fiery chariots rushed to bring  
The offerings of humanity.



## SOME MEMORIES

---

Thy tender pity met our pain,  
Thy love has raised us from the dust;  
We meet to bless thee, Lord, again,  
And in our temple sing our trust.

There was only one strain I could think of for the hymn: it was again the grand Old Hundred.

One more memory I must touch of those books the dear friend would fain save for us when she felt sure their home would be saved, but they were burned with the home. They were all about our home county of York, and most precious to me for that reason. Another good woman, a writer, saw me in the stress of my trouble, and made a note of it for a letter she would write, I think it was for our *New York Tribune*. Some word of it must have gone to London, for a letter came from there asking me if I could remember the titles of those books. Well, I could not forget them: they were graven, shall I say? on my heart. And then, just about the time we were rejoicing in our new home, what should come to crown my joy but all the volumes I had lost, with a good many more I had never hoped to have for my very own. And here they are now all about me as I write this memory, the gift of Sir Edwin Lawrence, the brother to Sir James of blessed memory.

## SOME MEMORIES

---

He had heard or read of the incident and sent for the catalogue, so I was rich again beyond my hopes and fears.

And now I must say farewell in this final memory to the friends I cannot name here and over the sea. It has been a pleasant task for me to write them, sweet as they are or bitter, or bitter sweet, as they would steal out from the mists of the many years. The good Bishop Horn says, "Wormwood eaten with bread is not bitter"; and these are all blended for me now with the bread of life of my childhood, my youth, and my manhood through the fifty years all told when they close. Thirty-two years more have come and gone since then; but of these I cannot tell you now (and "cannot" means "need not" to me), as I glance toward my sun's setting and remember the saying, "The young may die soon, but the old must." Still I am glad to stay so long as I may, while in some rare moments I must confess I feel some touch of eagerness to go when I am held captive by the vision of my beloved waiting for me, my very own and so many more where mortality is swallowed up of life.







